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THE WOMAN WHO VOWED

(THE DEMETRIAN)

BY

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THE DEMETRIAN

CHAPTER I

A GODDESS AND A COMIC SONG

I REMEMBER awakening with a start, conscious of a face bending over me that was beautiful and strange.

I was quite unable to account for myself, and my surprise was heightened by the singular dress of the woman I saw. It was Greek—not of modern but of ancient Greece.

What had happened? Had I been acting in a Greek play and been stunned by an accident to the scenery? No; the grass upon which I was lying was damp, and a sharp twinge between the shoulders told me I had been there already too long. What, then, was the meaning of this classic dress?

I raised myself on one arm; and the young woman who had been kneeling beside me arose also. I was dazed, and shaded my eyes from the sun on the horizon—whether setting or rising I could not tell. I fixed my eyes upon the feet of

my companion; they were curiously shod in soft leather, for cleanliness rather than for protection; tightly laced from the toe to the ankle and half way up the leg—half-moccasin and half-cothurnus. I fixed my eyes upon them and slowly became quite sure that I was alive and awake, but seemed still dazed and unwilling to look up. Presently she spoke.

"Are you ill?" she asked.

"I don't think so," answered I, as I lifted my eyes to hers.

When our eyes met I jumped to my feet with an alertness so fresh and fruitful that I seemed to myself to have risen anew from the Fountain of Youth. A miracle had happened. I was dead and had come to life again—and apparently this time in the Olympian world.

"Héré!" I exclaimed; "or Athéné! Cytherea, or Artemis!"

Then quickly the look of sympathetic concern that I had just seen in her eyes vanished. A ripple of laughter passed over her face like the first touch of a breeze on a becalmed sea; for a moment she seemed to restrain it, but her merriment awakened mine, and on perceiving it she abandoned all restraint and burst into a laugh that was musical, bewitching, and contagious. We stood there

a full minute, both of us laughing, though I did not understand why. She soon explained.

"Where on earth do you come from, Xenos, and where—*where* did you get *those* things?" She pointed to my pantaloons as she spoke.

Then I discovered how ridiculous I appeared.

"And why have they cut all the hair off your face and left that ugly little stubble?"

I put my hand to my chin and felt there a beard of several days' growth.

"It must prick dreadfully," she said; and coming up to me she daintily passed a soft, rosy finger over my cheek. I caught her hand and kissed it. She jumped away from me like a fawn.

"Take care, young man," she said, reprovingly but not reproachfully; "though I don't suppose you are very young, for I see some gray in your hair."

I don't suppose I liked being reminded of my years, but I was altogether too much absorbed in the richness of her beauty and health to be concerned about myself. And the subtle combination of freedom and reserve in her manner conveyed to me an indescribable charm. At one moment it tempted me to trespass, but at the next I became aware that such an attempt would meet with humiliating resistance; for she was tall and strong.

Her one rapid movement away from me proved her agility. She was perfectly able to take care of herself. Her consciousness of this had enabled her to meet my first advance with unruffled good humor, but I felt sure that persistence on my part would elicit repulsion and perhaps scorn.

We stood a moment smiling at each other; then she said:

"Come, you must take off those dreadful things; why, you are wet through"—and she passed her hand over my back—"and you must tell me what you are and where you come from. But you are chilled now and need something warm, so come to the Hall and you can tell me as we go."

As she spoke she swung to her head a basket I had not before observed; it was heavy, for she straightened herself to support it; and the weight, until she balanced it, brought out the muscles of her neck. She put her arms akimbo and showed the way.

"Well," she said, as we walked together side by side, "when are you going to begin?"

"How and where shall I begin?" answered I. "You forget that I too have questions to ask; I am bewildered. Who and what are you? In what country am I? Where did you get that

beautiful dress?" I stepped a little away from her to observe the beauty of her form.

"We try to make all our garments beautiful," she answered, simply; "but this is the common dress of all—or rather the dress commonly worn in the country. We dress a little differently in town—but what do you find peculiar in my attire? What else could I wear out in the fields?"

I looked at the drapery, which did not hang lower than the knee; at the girdle that barely indicated the waist; at the chiton gathered by a brooch on one shoulder, leaving bare the whole length of her richly moulded arm.

"I would not have you wear anything else," said I, restraining my admiration; "but our women dress differently."

"Tell me about them," said she.

"I will," answered I, "but tell *me* first where I am and where we are going?"

"You are near a place called Tyringham," answered she, "and you are going with me to breakfast at the Hall."

As she spoke we were walking down a grassy slope and came in sight of a meadow on the left, through which meandered a crystal stream; it flowed from the right of the hill on which we stood, and just below where it fell in cascades over

successive ledges it was straddled by a mill smothered in jasmine and purple clematis. The moment the mill came in sight my companion uttered a loud call that came echoing back to us from the surrounding hills. Her call was answered by several voices, and soon there came to meet us a youth as handsome in his way as my own companion. He, too, wore the Greek dress; he was about eighteen years of age and so like the girl that I guessed at once he was her brother. He put me out of countenance by staring at me with open-mouthed wonder and then bursting into an uncontrolled roar of laughter. But his sister took him by the arm and shook him.

"Stop laughing," she said. "Don't you see he doesn't like it?"

The boy stopped immediately—for I confess his laughter was not as agreeable to me as hers—and there came upon him an expression of the gentlest solicitude.

"I am sorry," he said, with tears of laughter still in his eyes; "I thought you were playing a joke on us."

I tried to look pleasant.

"I cannot at all account for myself," I said, "or for you; I suppose a long time has elapsed since I went to sleep; so long that I hardly remem-

ber where it was, though I think it was in Boston —in my bachelor quarters there."

They both looked puzzled and concerned.

"And what is your name?" asked the girl.

"Henry T. Joyce," answered I.

I could see that my very name amused them though they tried to conceal it.

"And yours?" asked I of the girl.

"Lydia—Lydia second, or more correctly, Lydia of Lydia."

"That means," said the boy, "that her mother's name was Lydia; and so I call myself Cleon of Lydia, because, my mother's name was Lydia. She," he added, pointing to the girl, "is my sister."

He was dressed, like her, in a simple tunic coming to the knees, and was shod like her also; but the tunic was not pinned up on one shoulder: it had sleeves like our jacket.

We were walking down the hill and came now in sight of a group of buildings entirely of wood, of a beauty that made them a delight to behold. One much larger than the others reminded me of what Westminster Hall would be if separated from the more recent Houses of Parliament. It was lighted by large Gothic windows that started from above a covered veranda; the veranda

offered countless opportunities for surprises in the way of carved pillars, twisting staircases, and subsidiary balconies, every corner being smothered in vines and bursting into blossoms of varied hue. Clearly the upper part of the building was a large hall, and the lower part split up into smaller rooms. Near this Hall and connected with it by covered ways were numerous other buildings, all different, but conforming to the lay of the land on either side of a torrent, upon one level reach of which stood the mill in the same quaint style.

"Our power house," said Cleon, pointing to it.

I thought of the hideous masonry that ruined the valley of the Inn between San Moritz and Celerina in the old days, and I wondered. But my eyes were too much bent on the beautiful lines of Lydia's form to linger long on the mill or its adjacent buildings. I had fallen behind her in order to be able to take better account of her. The weight of the basket on her head brought out the strength of her shoulders and the rhythmic movement of her body. Every time she turned to speak to us her hands left the waist in an unconscious effort to maintain her balance, thus throwing into relief the rounded outline of her arm and the delicacy of her wrist. "Alma venus genitrix," thought I, "hominum divumque voluptas."

Cleon kept talking all the way, interrupted occasionally by Lydia. He explained all the buildings to me and their respective uses. As we approached the Hall we met several other young men and women who joined us, for all were going in the same direction. Each expressed the same surprise and amusement on beholding me; they joined Lydia, who with an air of importance repeated her story to every one. I felt more comfortable between Lydia and Cleon and had therefore joined the brother and sister, so as to have the protection of one of them on either side.

When we reached the Hall, Cleon suggested that I must feel uncomfortable in my damp clothes and took me to the men's quarters. He provided me with all that was necessary for a complete toilet. A large swimming tank occupied the basement of the building, and into it I was glad to plunge. After I had shaved—for a razor was provided—I assumed the simple garment of my neighbors and for the first time felt ashamed of the whiteness of my skin. By the side of the swarthy limbs about me my arms and legs looked naked and pitiful. I was extremely hungry, however, and my appetite overcame my reluctance at facing the crowd that I felt was awaiting me at

the Hall. As we approached it we heard echoes of song and laughter.

"They have finished breakfast," said Cleon, pushing me through the open doorway.

Our entrance was unobserved, for they were all engaged in singing; the words I heard in chorus were "The Lightning Calculator!" They all stamped at each alternate syllable and I noticed that Lydia was the centre of observation. She was flushed, half with vexation and half with merriment, and was being held by a crowd of girls who prevented her from interfering with the soloist, who, standing on a chair with a guitar, was improvising.

I could not hear the words distinctly from where I stood but caught something about a certain Chairo, at the mention of whose name there was a laugh, and the stanza closed, as had the last, with "The Lightning Calculator," whereupon all laughed again and stamped as they repeated in chorus "The Light-ning Cal-cu-la-tor."

"That's my sister," said Cleon to me in a whisper. "She's the Lightning Calculator."

In the next stanza, which was quite unintelligible to me, I noticed an allusion to Demeter, at which the women looked shocked and the men delighted. I was wondering at the significance of

this when Lydia discovered me, and, delighted to divert attention from herself by directing it toward me, she said to the tormentors who were holding her: "There he is!"—and she nodded in my direction.

Immediately all eyes were turned toward me and I became painfully conscious of my bare white legs. The young man with the guitar stepped down from his chair and came to me.

"Welcome to Tyringham," said he. "We don't know how you got here or where you come from, but we are ready to answer questions and willing to ask none."

I stammered something in answer and was led to a table where two places had been left for us. Cleon and I sat down and food was brought. Lydia asked me a few conventional questions to put me at my ease; but hardly succeeded, for seemingly some hundreds were engaged in staring at me. At last some one pushed the soloist by the arm. "One more verse, Ariston," said he, and Ariston jumped on the chair again, and, twanging his guitar, resumed:

"Of swarthy skins she tires soon
To her new things must cater,
So now she's found a pantaloon—
The Lightning Calculator."

My legs were well under the table so I could join in the laugh, secretly satisfied to be associated with her even in the jingling nonsense of a comic song.

"Boobies!" exclaimed Lydia, "and Babies!" she added. "Boobies and Babies!" She ran to the door and they all followed her, boisterously laughing, and leaving me alone with Cleon.

"I didn't understand much of it," said I. "Who is Chairo?"

"Chairo is a great man; one of our great men; the youngest of them; he may become anything; but he is not popular because he is so dictatorial."

"And he is in love with Lydia?"

"Frightfully in love."

"And Lydia?"

"Ah! no one knows; she's very sly, Lydia"; and Cleon chuckled to himself.

"And why did everybody look at one another when Ariston sang about Demeter?"

"Well, the women don't like to have it talked about."

I was puzzled.

"Do tell me about it," I said, "for I know nothing about Demeter except what I have read in my classics."

"Well, Demeter, you see"—but he blushed

and stammered—"I really never had it altogether explained to me; the women never talk of it, and yet the Cult, as they call it, 'the Cult of Demeter,' is the most important thing to them in the world."

I went on eating my breakfast and trying to guess what Cleon was driving at, but altogether failed.

"What does this Cult of Demeter have to do with your sister?" I asked at last.

"Why," answered Cleon, looking round cautiously and lowering his voice, "Lydia is a Demetrian."

"What does that mean—'Demetrian'?"

"It means that she has been selected by Demeter."

"Do try to remember," I said a little impatiently, "that I know nothing about your Demeter and can make neither head nor tail of what you are saying."

The irritation I felt made me aware that I was jealous of Chairo, jealous of Demeter, and infatuated with Lydia. Cleon's half explanations seemed to be putting Lydia out of my reach, and I was exasperated at not being able to understand just how far.

"Well," answered Cleon, "I don't know whether I ought to tell you, but it's this way:

Lydia is awfully clever at figures. She can square any ten of them; add any number of columns; multiply any number by any number all in a flash. And so she's been selected by Demeter; that is to say, I suppose, they are going to marry her to some great mathematician."

"What!" exclaimed I, indignantly. "They are going to sacrifice her to a mathematician?"

"Sacrifice!" retorted Cleon with open eyes. "Why, it isn't a sacrifice! It is the greatest honor a woman can have!"

"And what does Lydia say to it?"

"She hasn't made up her mind."

"Oh, then, she has to be consulted," said I, relieved. "She cannot be compelled."

"Oh, no," answered Cleon, "she is selected—that is to say, the honor is offered to her; she may not accept it if she does not like; but a girl seldom refuses. She is no more likely to refuse the mission of Demeter than Chairo would be to refuse the Presidency. It is very hard work being President—very wearing; in fact, I should think it would be an awful bore; but nobody ever refuses it, because of the honor. I suppose it is the same thing with the mission of Demeter."

I was more and more puzzled, but despaired of getting satisfaction from Cleon.

CHAPTER II

HARVESTING AND HARMONY.

WE had finished breakfast now, and my hunger satisfied, I was free to look about me a little. The hall was lofty, and the roof supported by Gothic arches, sculptured by hands that had enjoyed the work; for although the design of the building was simple and dignified it was covered with ornaments of bewildering complexity. We were waited on by women who could not be distinguished from those upon whom they waited; of every age and of every type, most of them were glowing with health and cheerfulness. They laughed a great deal with one another, and offered me advice as to what they put before me; warned me when a dish was hot, and recommended the cream as particularly fresh and sweet. They made me feel as though I had been there for years and knew every one of them intimately. Just as we were finishing, a fine old man with a white beard and a patriarchal countenance joined us:

"You come from a couple of centuries ago," he said.

"Is it two centuries, or a thousand years?" asked I.

"I have been looking at your clothes; you don't mind, do you? they indicate the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth century."

"You have guessed right," said I; "and what year are you?"

"We count from the last Constitution which was voted ninety-three years ago, in 2011 of your reckoning. So we call the present year 93."

"So you have given up the old Constitution," I said with a touch of sentiment in my voice.

"Yes, it had to be changed when we advanced to where we are now in methods of manufacture and distribution of profits."

"Can you give your methods a name?"

"You used to call it Collectivism; we call it Solidarity."

"You mean to say you actually practise Collectivism!"

The patriarch smiled.

"Your writers used to say it was impossible," he said; "just as the English engineers once said the building of the Suez Canal was impossible, and our own engineers the building of the Panama

Canal was impossible. As a matter of fact, Collectivism is as much easier than your old plan as mowing with a reaper is easier than mowing with a scythe. You will see this for yourself—and you will see" here his brow darkened—"that the real problem—the as yet unsolved problem—is a very different one. But Cleon must join the haymakers; what would you like to do?"

I was much interested in the old man and was anxious to hear what he had to say about the "as yet unsolved problem," which I already guessed. But I was still more anxious to be with Lydia, so I asked:

"Does Cleon work with his sister?"

"Yes," said Cleon, "on the slope, a few minutes from here."

"Perhaps I had better make myself useful," said I hypocritically.

I thought I detected a little smile behind the big white beard as the old man said to Cleon, "Well, hurry off now; you are late."

I followed Cleon up the hill. He explained to me on the way that the meadows were all cut by machinery, but that the slopes had still to be cut by hand. We soon came upon a group in which I recognized Lydia and Ariston. They were on a steep hill. Lydia was swinging her

scythe with the strength and skill of a man. She was the nearest to me of a row of ten, all swinging together. Ariston was singing an air that followed the movement; he sang low; and all joined occasionally in a modulated chorus. Cleon took up a scythe and joined them. I was glad to observe that there was no scythe for me, for I had never handled one. I stood watching the work. When the song was over they worked in silence, but the rhythm of their swinging replaced the music. It reminded me of the exhilarating harmony of an eight-oared crew. At last one of the girls cried out, "I want to rest"; and all stopped.

"I was hoping some one would cry 'halt!'" said Ariston.

"So was I," whispered Lydia to him.

"So were we all," called out the rest.

They sat down on the grass; after a moment's breathing space Ariston lifted his hand; all looked at him, and he started a fugue which was taken up, one after another, by the entire party; to my surprise and delight I recognized Bach's Number Seven in C flat, and I began to understand the rôle that music might play in the life of a people, and what a pitiable business our twentieth-century notion of it was. Confined to a few laborious executants and still fewer composers, the rich

partook of it at stated hours in overheated rooms, and the masses ignored it, except in its most vulgar form, almost altogether; while here, under a tree in the large light of the sun during an interval of rest, all not only enjoyed it, but joined in it at its best. I singled out Lydia's rich contralto and noted how she dwelt on the notes that marked changes of key, with a delight in counter-point that belonged to her mathematical temperament. I watched her every movement. She had thrown off the loose gloves she wore while mowing and was lying on her face, playing with a flower. The posture would have been regarded by us of the twentieth century as unmaidenly; but in the atmosphere created by the simplicity of these people I felt as though I were in one of Corot's pictures. Maidenliness had ceased to be a matter of convention and had become a matter of fact. There was a fund of reserve behind the frankness of Lydia's manner that conveyed a conviction of rectitude entirely beyond the necessity of a rigorous manner, or of a particular method of deportment.

I seemed to be transported back to the peasantry of some parts of France or of the Tyrol; but here was an added refinement that demolished the distance which had always kept me despair-

ingly aloof from these; here was the charm of frankness, of gayety, and of simplicity, coupled with a cleanliness of person, delicacy of thought and manner, culture, art, music—all that makes life beautiful and sweet.

The young men and women who sat singing under the trees, smitten here and there with patches of sunlight, were all of them comely and wholesome of body and mind; but Lydia was to me preëminent; and yet, could it be said that she was beautiful? Her eyes were long and narrow and when I crossed glances with her they escaped me; so that I forgot the matter of beauty in my eagerness to penetrate their meaning; her face was too square to satisfy the ideal; her nose was distinctly tip-tilted, like the petal of a flower; her mouth was large and well shaped—altogether desirable; and her hair was flaxen and straight, but in its coils it seemed to have a separate life of its own so brightly did it gleam and glow.

Lydia was the first to jump up and suggest that work be resumed; and as she stood among the prostrate forms of her companions she embodied to my mind Diana, with a scythe in her hand instead of a bow. All arose together and set to work again, but in silence this time; and under the shade where I sat, nothing broke the

quiet save the hum of insect life in the blazing sun and the periodic swirl of the reapers. They did not rest again until the patch of hillside at which they worked was mown, when with a sigh of satisfaction they rested a moment on their scythes; but for a moment only, for presently Lydia ran for shelter from the sun to the shade of the tree under which I sat. She reclined quite close to me, looked me frankly in the face and smiled. I was surprised to find eyes that had escaped me till now suddenly become fixed composedly on mine, and noticed for the first time that these women put on and off their coquetry according to the context of their thought, for presently she said:

"I am afraid you are lazy!"

"I believe I am," answered I.

"You mean to say you wouldn't like to join us in our work?"

There was not the slightest reproach in her voice, only surprise.

"I much prefer looking at you," I replied with a little attempt at gallantry. But there was no response in her eyes that remained fixed on me. She was trying to explain me to herself. I felt uncomfortable at being a mere object of abstract curiosity. She was reclining on her side,

resting on one hand: in the other hand she was absently twisting a flower she had plucked. Notwithstanding my discomfort I rejoiced in at last plunging my look deep into hers. What was happening in the blue depths of those eyes? I felt as though I were trying to penetrate the secrets of a house the windows of which reflected more light than they passed through. I saw the reflection only. Behind was a judge weighing me in the balance, but as to whose judgment I could form no idea. And although I was conscious that in her I had a critic, I was so bewitched by her charm that I said to her in an undertone—for the others were talking to one another:

"You are very beautiful!"

She waved her flower before my eyes as though to put a material obstacle, however frail, between us and smiled; but she looked down presently and laughingly answered:

"That doesn't make you any the less lazy."

I did not wish to be set down permanently in her mind as good for nothing, so I explained:

"I am not incurably so; indeed, at my own work I was industrious; but I never held a scythe in my life."

She looked at me again in open-eyed wonder.

"What was 'your own work'?" asked she.

"I practised law."

"What, nothing but law? Did you never get tired of doing nothing but law?"

"We believed in specializing."

"Ah, I remember! The nineteenth century was the great century of specialization. Later on it was found that specialization was necessary to original work, but that it brutalized labor; we have very few specialists now: only those who have genius for particular things, as, for example, doctors, engineers, electricians—but we have no *lawyers*." She laughed at me with bantering but good-natured contempt in her laugh as she emphasized the word "lawyers." "And you mean to say you did nothing but lawyerise?" And she suddenly with finger and thumb lifted my free hand that was resting on the grass—for I was reclining on my other elbow, too—and I became aware that my hand was soft and white.

"It wasn't always soft and white," I explained. "I did a great deal of rowing at college."

She kept hold of my hand with finger and thumb and laughed gently:

"I don't believe it ever did a useful bit of work in its life."

I was piqued; and yet her low laugh was so

catching, her long eyes so subtle, her lips so bewitching, that I gladly let my hand hang in her contemptuous fingers so long as I could be near her and in commune with her.

"That depends on what you call useful work," said I.

"I call useful any work that contributes to our health, wealth, and well-being." The coquetry went out of her manner again and she became thoughtful. "The people of that time needed lawyers to fight their battles for them, but we have got rid of at any rate one principal occasion of discord—the occasion that made lawyers necessary. We have men specially versed in the law still, but they don't confine themselves to law; they cut hay too. Ariston is a great lawyer."

She had dropped my hand by this time; as she mentioned Ariston we both looked toward him; one of the girls exclaimed:

"I am hot; let's sing something cool."

"The Fountain," called out another.

Ariston lifted his hand again, and after beating a measure struck a clear high note; he held the note during a measure and then his voice came tumbling down the scale in bursts of semitones relieved by tonic spaces, with a variety that reminded me of the Shepherd's song in "Tristan

and Isolde." The moment he left the first high note it was taken up by another voice during the full measure, and as soon as the second voice dropped down the scale, a third one pitched the high note again, and so on voice after voice, the high note imaging the highest point of the *jet d'eau*, and every voice dropping tumultuously down into a placid pool of infinite variety below. Lydia did not attempt the high note, but beginning low kept at the low level in peaceful contrast to the sparkling tenors and sopranos, the whole musical structure resting on the bass which moved ponderously and contrapuntally against the contraltos.

How shall I tell the thoughts that crowded upon me as, lying on my back, I listened to this amazing harmony! The beginning reminded me of one of Palestrina's masses and transported me to a Christmas midnight at the church of St. Gervais; but as soon as the intention of the strain became clear to me, I felt that it belonged to the open air, to the eternal spaces, to the new-mown hay, to my radiant companions. The merriment of it, its complexity, its wholesomeness, the delight it gave—all brought to a focus and intensified the interest that was growing within me for Lydia.

But the whole party rose now to begin work on another hillside and Lydia turned to me with:

"Why do you stay with us? Why not go to the Hall? You will find the Pater there; we call him the Pater because he is the father of the settlement. He will want to talk to you, and you *need* to talk to him." She put an arch little emphasis on the word "need." Evidently she did not want me to be loitering among them. I pretended to adopt her suggestion with alacrity although in my heart I wished nothing but to remain with her.

"Yes," I said, "I shall never get out of my bewilderment unless I talk to some one who can understand my point of view."

"And you will probably find Chairo there," she added, with a provoking smile. "He was to arrive to-day."

Ariston pricked his ear:

"Ah!" he said. "You will enjoy meeting Chairo; he is the leader of our Radical party; he is in favor of all sorts of Radical measures—such as the destruction of the Cult—" the women looked at one another—"the respect of private property——"

"What! Do you call the respect of private property Radical?" asked I. "It was the shib-

boleth of the Conservatives in my time; they called it the 'sacredness of private property.'"

"Just as the Demetrians speak of the 'sacredness' of the Cult to-day," said Ariston.

"Whenever Hypocrisy wants to preserve an abuse she calls it Sacred," said a strong voice at my elbow. I turned and saw that a new companion had been added to us, and I guessed at once that it was Chairo.

He was a splendid man; nothing was wanting to him—stature, nor beauty, nor strength. He was remarkable, too, by the fact that his face was clean shaved, whereas all the other men I had met wore beards; but his face bore a likeness so striking to that of Augustus that to have hidden it by a beard would have been a desecration. And he was strong enough in mind as well as in muscle to bear being exceptional. It would have been impossible for him to be other than exceptional.

Lydia blushed as she recognized him, and the blush suggested what I most feared to know. Chairo went to her and without a shadow of affectation took her hand, knelt on one knee, and kissed it. There could have been no clearer confession of his love. I could not help contrasting the frankness of this act and the superb humility of it with the reticence, hypocrisy, and pride

that characterized our twentieth-century love-making.

Lydia with her disengaged hand made a sign of the cross over his head; not the rapid, timid, fugitive conventional sign that Catholics made in our day, but with her whole arm, a large sign, swinging from above her head to his as it bowed over her hand, with a large sweep afterward across; and as she did so I saw her eyes widen and her glance stretch forward across the heavenly distance.

For the first time I felt the narrowness of my life and my own insignificance. And I—*I*—had dared to think I could make love to this woman! For a moment it occurred to me that Lydia had encouraged me; but so mean an apprehension of her could not live in her presence. As she stood there making the sign of the cross over the bowed head of her beloved, I knew that Love was something more in this civilization than the satisfaction of a caprice or the banter of good-humored gallantry; that it was possible to make of Love a religion, without for that reason sacrificing the charm of life, and the particular charm that makes the companionship of a woman something different from the companionship of a man.

And yet I was puzzled; was Lydia not a

Demetrian? Cleon had told me she had not yet made up her mind; but was there not in this greeting with Chairo a practical admission of a betrothal? And what was the meaning of the sign of the cross? Was Christianity still alive, then? And if so, how reconcile Christ and Demeter? And there swung through my mind the terrible invocation of the poet: "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean! The world has grown gray from thy breath."

When the cult of Demeter had first been hinted to me I had assumed that the reign of the Galilean was over, and that the old gods had resumed their sway. The possibility of this had admitted a note of latent triumph in the hymn to Proserpine.

> Will thou yet take all, Galilean? Yet these things thou shalt not take:
> The laurel, the palm and the pæan; the breast of the nymph in the brake.

Could it be that we could keep these things and yet remain loyal to the religion of sacrifice? Could we worship as well at the voluptuous altar of Cytherea and at the mystic shrine of the Holy Grail?

My mind was in a tumult of inquiry as Chairo

arose from his knee and engaged in conversation with the group; and though they did not point or look at me I knew that it was of me they were talking. Presently, Chairo came to me and held out his hand:

"You are a traveller from the Past, I hear! Dropped down among us in some unaccountable way." He looked me squarely in the eye as he held my hand a moment, with a frank scrutiny that I had already noticed in Lydia. Then he added:

"You were returning to the Hall; if you don't mind, I shall accompany you; it is too late for me to begin work before lunch; besides, there is no scythe for me." And waving his hand to Lydia and the others, he walked away with me toward the Hall.

CHAPTER III

THE CULT OF DEMETER

FOR some distance we walked in silence. At last I said: "You will not be surprised to hear that I am bewildered; everything is in some respects so much the same and in others so different."

"I am curious to know what bewilders you most."

"Well, it is bewildering enough to be told that you are actually living under the régime of Collectivism—a thing which we always considered impossible; but I confess what piques my curiosity most is this cult of Demeter——"

A scowl came over Chairo's face.

"How much do you know about it?" said he.

"Nothing, except that Lydia is a Demetrian and that she is to be married to some mathematician——"

"Married!" interrupted Chairo. "It cannot

be called a marriage! It is a desecration!" He paused a moment as if to collect himself and then began again in a calmer voice:

"It is difficult for me to speak of it without impatience; but declamation which is well enough on the rostrum is not tolerable in conversation, so I shall not give way to it. The cult of Demeter is an abomination—one of the natural fruits of State Socialism, which, to my mind, means the paralysis of individual effort and death to individual liberty. I lead the opposition in our legislature, and you will, therefore, take all I say with the allowance due to one who has struggled, his whole life through, against what I believe to be an intolerable abuse. The cult of Demeter is nothing more nor less than the attempt to breed men as men breed animals. It totally disregards the fact that a man has a soul, and that the demands of a soul are altogether paramount over those of the body. To attempt to breed men along purely physical or mental lines without regard to psychical aspirations is contrary not only to common sense, but to the highest religion. Did not Christ Himself say, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul'?"

"You quote Christ," interrupted I. "Is it

possible that the Christian religion can live side by side with the cult of Demeter?"

"Yes," said Chairo, "and this is perhaps just where the mischief lies. Christianity has remained among us as the religion of sacrifice; and the priests of Demeter bolster up their hideous doctrine and their exorbitant power by appeal to this religion of sacrifice."

"But where," asked I, "do they derive this power of theirs?"

"Where else," answered Chairo, "but through the hold they have upon the imagination of the women—that terrible need for ritual which has given the priest his power ever since the world began. Gambetta was right, 'Le cléricalisme; voilá l'ennemi.'"

"Do you mean to say," asked I, "that superstition has survived among you?"

"No, you cannot call it superstition; the time has long since passed when the priesthood could impose on the minds of men through superstition; but just because they now appeal to a higher and nobler function of mind are they the more dangerous."

"Tell me," I said—I paused a moment, for I was very anxious to ask a question and yet a little afraid to do so.

But Chairo looked at me again with a look so frank that I ventured:

"Tell me," I said, "is Lydia going to accept the mission?"

"No one can tell," said Chairo. "She is profoundly religious, profoundly possessed with this notion of sacrifice; she has been brought up to believe the mission of Demeter the highest honor which the state can give, and it comes to her now clothed with all the mysticism of a strange ritual and a religious obligation. Think of it: just because she has the talent of rapid calculation, a knack which you in your time used to exhibit as a freak in a country fair, she is to be sacrificed—ah, if it were only a sacrifice I shouldn't complain—but she is to be contaminated. She is to be contaminated, because, forsooth, it is believed that by coupling this knack of calculation with one possessing a profounder genius for mathematics, she will bring into the world a being further endowed with mathematical ability. What if she did; is there not something in the world worth more than mathematics?"

"And what mathematician will be selected?" asked I.

"That is the wicked part of it," answered Chairo; "that matter is absolutely in the hands

of the priests. My God!" he said, "I shall not endure it.

His eyes flashed, and his voice, though low, rang as he spoke these words. But we were now approaching the Hall and we saw the Pater, as they called him, sitting upon the veranda. "I have spoken vigorously," he said in a lower voice, as we approached the Hall—"perhaps too vigorously; but I do not mean to disguise my intention. I would not speak in this way upon a public platform, because they would endeavor to stop me, and the issue would be raised before public opinion is ripe for it. But I warn you the Pater is on the side of the priests, and so, to avoid discussion, which we seldom allow to interfere with the harmony of our domestic life, I recommend you not to speak of these things to the Pater when I am present."

The Pater arose and advanced to meet us, holding out his hands to Chairo.

"Welcome to Tyringham," he said. And then looking toward me he added: "You could not get hold of a better man to explain to you the changes that have occurred since your time, but I warn you he will not give you an optimistic view of them."

I smiled, but said nothing.

After a few words about the weather and the crops Chairo left us, and I at once began upon the burning theme.

I repeated to him the substance of what Chairo had said, leaving out the heat, the indignation, and the threat. I sat down on the balcony with the Pater, and he, after listening to me, began:

"Chairo is a man of extraordinary gifts, and has, of course, the quality which generally attends these gifts—inordinate ambition. Such men are naturally prone to favor individualism as opposed to collective action, and to desire the rewards that come from individual success. It was such men as Chairo who prevented so long the realization of Solidarity, and who will always constitute a formidable opposition. Nor, indeed, would it be well for the state that they should cease to exist; for the Collectivist community would soon lapse into mere routine and officialism, were it not kept perpetually at its best by the opposition of just such as these.

"Unfortunately in this particular case his opposition is rendered not only acute but dangerous, by the fact that he has come into collision with one of the most precious institutions of the state, through his inordinate passion for Lydia.

Indeed, I had Chairo in mind when I said to you, as we parted, that the economic problem presented by the distribution of wealth was by far the least of the problems that presented themselves. The desire for the accumulation of wealth is an artificial desire; it grew with the institution of private property, and when the institution of private property was abolished the desire for it very soon, in great part, disappeared. But the desire of a man for a woman is an elemental passion which has its root deep down in the necessities of human nature. This passion will always be with us and will always tend, when coupled with such abilities as Chairo's, to disrupt the state."

"But," I interrupted, "is not this cult of Demeter a dangerous thing?"

"To the mind of Chairo," answered he, "inflamed as it is by his love for Lydia, undoubtedly it is. But all those who belong to Chairo's party and hate Collectivism because it doesn't furnish them the reward which they feel due to their ability, are using this issue in an attempt to break up the entire system. But consider for a moment what is this cult of Demeter which you think so dangerous. In the first place there is in it no coercion, absolutely none: the priests tender to

such women as they think proper the mission of Demeter, and this mission can be accepted or declined; no disgrace attends the declining of it; the woman to whom it is offered is absolutely free. In the second place, the cult is to the utmost degree reasonable. Let us, for a moment, glance at the notions that have prevailed on this subject in times past.

"From the earliest civilization the notion has prevailed that the most highly religious act a woman could perform was to make the sacrifice involved in celibacy. We see it in one of its most beautiful developments at Rome. There, to the Vestal Virgins was entrusted the maintenance of the sacrificial flame; to them were accorded the highest honors of the Roman state, the most favored places at all state functions; they alone, except the consuls, were preceded in the street by lictors, and if, in walking through the streets of Rome, they met a criminal going to execution, he was immediately set free. The sacrifice required by this institution was chastity.. So, in the Christian Church, those of both sexes who desired to give themselves particularly to the worship of Christ secluded themselves in convents and took the vow of chastity. Yet what a barren piece of sentimentality it was! We respect it still, because

there was in it the element of sacrifice; but a woman capable of such self-sacrifice as this commits a crime against the body politic by refusing to become the mother of children; it is just from such women as these that we want to raise new generations, capable of carrying the torch of civilization onward in its march. The real sacrifice to be demanded of these is not chastity; it is the surrender of personal inclination to the benefit of the commonwealth. The real sacrifice consists in refusing to leave the maternal function at the mercy of a momentary caprice, and, on the contrary, in consecrating it to a noble purpose and to the general good. But you can hardly understand all this till you have heard the story of Latona, who founded the cult—the first and greatest saint in our calendar."

The Pater did not persuade me; it was horrible to me that it should be in the power of any man or men, by appealing to a woman's willingness to sacrifice herself or by the exercise of priestly craft, to condemn her to marriage without love, which, to my mind, is its only justification.

"And you think," said I, protesting, "that it is right to sacrifice the love of a woman for life?"

"No," interrupted the Pater, "not for life! There you labor under a mistake. Let me tell you

what happens: if a woman accepts the mission she becomes attached to the temple of Demeter, and while attending upon the ritual is slowly prepared for the act of sacrifice; this is a period of seclusion and prayer. Not that we believe in the existence of a goddess Demeter, but that Demeter represents to us that divinity in our own hearts which puts passion under constraint, and makes of it, not a capricious tyrant, but a servant to human happiness—our own happiness best understood, believe me—as well as the happiness of the community. And so the Vestal—for so we entitle her—invokes and keeps herself in communion with this special divinity within us each, and without us all, until her heart is lifted into a consciousness of her mission as the highest possible to her sex. Compare that, my friend, with the maternity which is often the undesired consequence of a caprice or ceremony. But as I have already hinted, the sacrifice is neither imposed at all, nor is it suggested for a lifetime.

"Indeed, the Demetrian ceremony, once consummated, often results in permanent marriage; upon this point the woman has the first word; though, of course, the ultimate conclusion must rest upon the consent of both. For example, the woman decides the question whether the bride-

groom shall become known to her. Some women, in whom the instinct of the mother predominates over that of the wife, elect never to know the father of their child; and as soon as pregnancy is assured, cease all relations with him. Others, indeed the great majority, become mystically attached to the man who, in the obscurity of the Demetrian temple, has accomplished for them the mission of their motherhood; they ask to see him; and if upon fuller acquaintance both consent, a provisional marriage is celebrated between them."

"Provisional marriage!" exclaimed I, aghast again.

"All our first marriages are provisional," answered the Pater with magnificent disregard for my indignation. "What can be more preposterous—more fatal to happiness—than to commit a man and woman for life to bonds accepted at an age when the mind is immature, and under an impulse which is notoriously blinding. It became a commonplace paradox in your time that the fact of being in love was a convincing argument against marriage; for a human being in love is one who has been by so much deprived of reason —by so much deprived of the exercise of the very judgment most necessary to select a life companion. Look back at the consequences of your in-

stitution of marriage: in your time it was already in process of dissolution; the facility of divorce had already destroyed the indissolubility of marriage, and made of it a mere time contract. And divorce, that the clergy of your day regarded as a trespass of Immorality on the sanctity of the marriage tie, was, as a matter of fact, the protest of Morality against the immoral consequences of the indissolubility of the marriage tie. No, there are two essential elements in sexual morality: one is temperance; the other is sacrifice. All are expected to practise the one; the few only are capable of practising the other. The art is to frame institutions which recognize this and to accommodate the institution to the temperament of the race——"

"Yes," interrupted I, "but this is just where you fail; how are you accommodating your Demetrian institutions to such temperaments as those of Lydia and Chairo? Do you not see that by imposing them in such cases as theirs you are risking the wreck of your entire system?"

"You are perhaps right," answered the Pater. "I am not initiated into the secrets of the priesthood; but it may be easily guessed that upon the application of the system there may well be divergence of opinion. We have already seen the sys-

tem result in infamous outrage in the South, and give rise to the necessity of government intervention—a very dangerous thing in such questions."

"But how do you practise this system of provisional marriage?"

"Simply enough: the first marriage is always provisional; if a child is born, the marriage must last until the child is weaned; at that time the parties are expected either to renew the vow of fidelity in the temple of Demeter, or to renounce it. They can at that time renounce it without disgrace, though it is seldom renounced without heart-burning; one wants to renounce and the other to renew. But both know in advance that the day of the weaning—which is a function of the cult—is the day upon which final vows are to be pronounced; both prepare for it, and its inevitable coming insures on the part of the one who most desires the renewal a conduct of a nature to insure it. But renunciation on the part of either involves no disgrace. A second renunciation after a second marriage is otherwise. There is no institutional obstacle to it; each or both can at any time renounce; but public opinion has happily created a sentiment against a second renunciation, which makes them rare. This is just where the system broke down in the South;

the public opinion against repeated renunciations did not exist; caprice became the order of the day; the priests of Demeter became corrupt; and sexual disorder involved, as it always must, every conceivable other disorder in the state."

"And what was done?" I asked.

The Pater looked grave: "The Government interfered and substituted state control for individual control. It is this that furnishes to Chairo and his party their strongest weapon. State control is abominable; institutions like ours are possible only in a community possessed of such a moral sense as prevails in these New England States."

"But how could the Government undertake control of marriage?"

"By an extension of our State Colony system; this you will understand only when you have seen the working of the State Colony system for yourself."

One thing more I was eager to know. "What had the gesture of Lydia, as Chairo kissed her hand, meant; was it an acceptance?" I asked the Pater, and he answered:

"Just as it is no disgrace to a man that a woman should not return his love, so is it no disgrace to a woman that she should withhold her

answer. In your time a woman who did not respond affirmatively or negatively to a proposal of marriage was accused of playing fast and loose. But we do not regard it as a bad thing for a man to be kept waiting, or for a woman to keep him waiting; indeed, I am reminded of a word of one of your own authors who said that there was no better education for a man's character than the effort to win the love of a worthy woman. And so, when a man has altogether made up his mind that he loves a woman, he does not feel it necessary to keep his love secret till he knows whether the woman will accept it; on the contrary, he makes open confession of it as Chairo did. And the woman, if she is not prepared to decide, responds to such an act as Chairo's, with a sign of the cross to indicate that she is for the time being set apart until such time as she has prayerfully considered. And in Lydia's case, this has a double signification; her choice is doubly religious, in that she not only has to consult her heart as to her love for Chairo, but also her conscience as to her duty to the cult."

I was glad that the reapers began returning and that our conversation was brought to a close by their return, for I was fairly tired. Great as was my curiosity to know more of these singu-

lar institutions I felt the need of thinking a little about them before my mind was crowded with further information. And so I gladly returned to the men's quarters, which were becoming crowded with those who had more right there than I to a plunge in the crystal pool. We were soon ready for lunch, and I was accompanied thither by Chairo, Cleon, and Ariston.

CHAPTER IV.

ANNA OF ANN

MY place at lunch was by the side of the Mater. I soon guessed that she was the wife of the patriarchal old man with whom I had been conversing. She had a delicious air of comfortable *embonpoint,* a clear skin, pink cheeks, and massive white hair. She was already seated when Ariston took me to her table, and, moving the empty chair a little to help me to my seat, she said, smiling:

"You are to sit here; I am dreadfully anxious to talk to you; where on earth have you come from now?"

I sat down by her, and answered:

"I wish you could explain it to me."

She looked me in the face and said: "You look just like the rest of us, except, that only our *priests* shave"; I looked in the direction of Chairo inquiringly. "Oh, yes, Chairo shaves, and a few others who want to be peculiar; but all of us simple folk——"

She chuckled a little, and then, bending near me, whispered in my ear: "I have been looking at your trousers!"

I made a deprecating gesture and smiled; she joined me, but in a laugh so brimming over with merriment and so contagious that very soon all the table had joined but without knowing why. When the Mater had finished laughing and the others with her, 'Ariston said:

"Well, Mater, now that you've finished laughing, perhaps you will tell us what it's all about?"

"Indeed, I won't," answered she; and there was almost a wink in her innocent old eye as she turned to me and said: "It is a secret—isn't it?—a secret between us two," and she patted my hand as if I had been her son.

I promised her with exaggerated solemnity never to reveal it, and she patted my hand again and added:

"I see you'll become one of us—one of the Tyringham Colony; we always come together at every harvest time—as indeed do all the other colonies—only we think our colony is just a little bit nicer than every other."

"And so does every other," said 'Ariston, "think itself better than the rest."

"And so all are happy," answered the Mater

convincingly. "But have you met your neighbor, Anna of Ann?"

I turned to my right, and saw that Lydia was not the only beautiful woman at Tyringham. Anna of Ann was of a different type. Her features were delicate; the eye was not remarkable; indeed, her glance was veiled and almost disappointing; her nose was ordinary; her skin clear but colorless; it was assuredly in her mouth, and perhaps in her low forehead and clustering hair, that her beauty resided; and as she spoke there were little movements of the lips that were bewitching:

"No, I have not been haymaking with Ariston's group and so we have not spoken," she said. "But I saw you this morning after breakfast, and"—she added archly—"I stared at you with all the others; we were dreadfully rude! But then, there *was* some excuse for us, wasn't there?"

"Every excuse," I answered reassuringly. "But tell me, what do you do when you are not haymaking?"

"What do you mean; work or play?"

"What do you work at, and what do you play at?"

"My work generally consists in attending at

the public store; I sell in the hosiery department at New York."

"And what do you play at?"

"Sculpture."

"She's a great sculptor," volunteered Cleon, nodding at her from the other side of the table.

"No, I am not," deprecated Anna; "I am not recognized."

I looked at the Mater inquiringly.

"By 'recognized,'" said the Mater, "she means the state hasn't recognized her; that is to say, she has to do her work at the store or wherever else she is assigned during the regular three hours a day. When the state recognizes her—as it is sure to do one of these days—she will be allowed to devote all her time to sculpture."

"I don't believe the state will ever recognize her," said Ariston; "she is a great deal too good. That Sixth is a fool!"

"Sixth is head of the fine arts department," explained the Mater. "His full name is Sprague Sixth; six generations ago we had a great artist called Sprague, who was for twenty years our secretary of the fine arts, and one of his sons has borne his name ever since, until it has become a tradition in Massachusetts that we must have a Sprague at the head of our fine arts. This man

Sprague Sixth, whom we call Sixth for short, doesn't believe anybody can be good at art unless he has studied in the state school. Now Anna did not show any talent until her school days were over and she had been assigned to work in the store."

"And now there is no chance for her," said Ariston ironically.

"What do you mean," exclaimed Cleon, taking Ariston seriously, "she can be a great artist, without being recognized?"

"I am not sure I want to be recognized," said Anna. "If I were recognized I should have to spend half my day in doing dull things for the state to please Sixth; whereas, now one half of the day is spent in doing mechanical work at the store; the other half I have fresh for my own work. I am going to ask to be assigned to a factory; for factory work is still more mechanical than that of the store, and I can then be more free to think of my own work."

All this was very strange and illuminating. A sculptor asking to do factory work!

"But won't factory work be very hard and brutalizing?" I asked.

Anna looked at me, puzzled, and Ariston came to her rescue.

"I don't think," he said, "Anna appreciates your point of view. In your day all factory work was done purely to make money; the factories were uncomfortable places, and workmen had to work eight and ten hours a day. Now that most of us have to do some factory work during the year, inventiveness has set to work to make the factory comfortable, and as we all of us have to work for the state and we no longer have to pay the cost of competition, three or four hours a day are all that are necessary to furnish the whole community with the necessaries and comforts of life."

"And so I can give the rest of the day to sculpture," said Anna.

"Without any anxiety as to whether her sculpture will pay or not," added Ariston.

"She just has to please herself," said the Mater comfortably.

"I am dreaming!" said I.

"No, you're not," said the Mater; and she pinched me till I started.

Everybody found this very funny—and so I took it as good-naturedly as I could. But I made up my mind to have a little revenge, so I asked the Mater quite loud as soon as they had finished laughing:

"Tell me, is Lydia the only Demetrian here?"

All looked shocked except Cleon, who laughed louder than ever, but Anna looked at him severely and said:

"Cleon, I'm surprised."

I noticed, too, a smile curl Ariston's lip. The Mater put a warning finger to her mouth and shook her head reproachfully.

"You see," I said, with no small satisfaction at the confusion I had caused, "I am new to all these things; I have to distinguish fact from fancy; the sacred from the profane."

"Of course," said Ariston, "although we have our domestic life in the cities, apart, every family having its own separate home, even there we jostle against one another a great deal more than you used in your time; and here at the colony we are like one large family; we have, therefore, to respect one another's opinions, and I might add—prejudices." He bowed here at the Mater as though in deference to her cult of Demeter. "We wouldn't be happy otherwise; and we have learned that after all, the highest religion is the highest happiness. And so each of us respects the religion of the other; in our heart of hearts we doubtless tax one another with superstition,

but we never admit it. Every cult, therefore, is tolerated and receives the outward respect of all."

I could not help wondering whether this was true. Chairo clearly regarded the cult of Demeter as dangerous and bad; how long then would he tolerate it? Ariston divined my thought, for he added:

"Of course, I assume that the cult involves no danger to the state; or to individual liberty."

But the brows of the women darkened and I felt we were on dangerous ground, so I asked:

"And what are you going to do this afternoon?"

"We are going on with our haymaking."

"But I thought you worked only three or four hours a day?"

"Yes, that is all we owe the state; but we often ask to work all day for a season in order to have the whole day to ourselves later. And as harvesting must be done within a given space of time, it suits our economy as well as our inclination to work all day at this season and have October to ourselves. Most of us go hunting all of October, and in November we meet again at the Eleusinian festival."

"Hunting?" I asked; "but where do you hunt?"

"Almost wherever we want, though, of course, this has to be arranged. Since your time the state has replanted forests on all the high ground least suited to agriculture, and game is carefully preserved there during the whole year except October; which is our open season. Some hunting is done, too, in November and December to suit the convenience of those who have to work in October; but it is mostly done in October."

Lunch was by this time over and we adjourned to the veranda for coffee and a cigar. There we were joined by Chairo and others, and gradually I began to get some notion of the working of their Collectivist State. But as their explanations left me in considerable bewilderment, and it was only when I saw the system in actual operation that I understood it, I shall not attempt to give an account of our conversations, but rather describe the events that followed, not only for the interest of the events themselves, but for the light they threw on the problems which still remain unsolved for our race.

Lydia's good-natured reproach at my idleness kindled in me a desire to remove the occasion of it, so I set myself to learn to mow, and in a very few days my muscles accustomed themselves to the work. I soon picked up a part in their favorite

refrains and was able to join in their music as well as their occupations. My ardor for Lydia cooled when I felt its hopelessness; and I confess to an admiration for Chairo which justified her love for him. Neither of them attempted to disguise their desire to be alone with each other, and yet they never moved far from the rest of us. Obviously, Lydia had not decided between Chairo and Demeter.

The Pater told me that she need not decide for another year, though it was likely that she would do so at the Eleusinian festival in November. This festival, corresponding to our Thanksgiving Day, was held in honor of Demeter and Persephone, the genii of fruitfulness, whether of the earth or of men; and it was generally on some such occasion that vows were taken or missions renounced.

CHAPTER V

IRÉNÉ

I SPENT the whole harvest season at Tyringham, and when it was over I went with Chairo to New York in order to get some ocular understanding of their factory system. It was there that I understood one of the reasons that made Lydia hesitate, for I met there another woman—a Demetrian also—whose history had been intimately interwoven with Chairo's.

Lydia had decided, much to Chairo's disappointment, that she would spend October in the Demetrian cloister attached to the temple. She said she felt the need of seclusion. It was one of the functions of the cloistered to attend the daily rite at the altar, and I often went at the sacred hour to attend the service, doubtless drawn by the desire to see Lydia engaged in her ministration. One afternoon, as I sat in the shadow of a pillar, I was struck by the singular majesty of one of the ministrants. She headed the procession

of women who carried the censers, and it was she who offered the incense at the altar.

I was living with Chairo and Ariston in bachelor quarters and described the priestess to the latter on my return home. Ariston's face flushed as he answered: "That must be Iréné of Tania; she is a Demetrian and is the mother of a boy by Chairo."

Noticing that my question had moved Ariston I was unwilling to push my inquiries; but after a few moments of silence Ariston, who after his laconic answer had lowered his eyes to the book he was reading, looked up and seeing the question in my eyes that I had refrained from putting into words, added:

"Her story is a sad one. She was selected by Demeter not on account of any special gifts, but because of her splendid combination of qualities; she was a type; she represented a standard it was useful to reproduce. Chairo for similar reasons was selected as her bridegroom; she chose to know him and became deeply enamored. How should she not? He remained devoted to her until her boy was weaned and then did not renew his vows. She bore his decision with dignity; indeed, so well did she disguise her disappointment that for a long time no one knew whether it was Chairo or

herself who had decided to separate. But when Chairo began to show his love for Lydia, Iréné sickened; there was no apparent reason for it and no acute disease; her appetite failed and she lost strength and color."

Ariston paused, as though he were going over it all in his mind, unwilling to give it utterance. Finally, he arose and walked to the window, and after looking out a little, turned to me and said:

"The fact is, I was consumedly in love with her myself; her illness gave me an excuse for being a great deal with her, and at last in a moment of folly—for I might have guessed—I told her of my love. I shall never forget her face when I did so: the sadness on it deepened; she held out her hand to me and said: 'I am fond of you, Ariston—and am grateful! But I love Chairo and shall never love anyone but him.'" Ariston's voice became hoarse as he repeated Iréné's words. But he paused, cleared his throat, and went on.

"Since then she has made a great effort over herself. She was told that she was allowing sorrow to unfit her for her duty to her child, and that she was suffering from no malady beyond that most pernicious of all maladies—the malady of the will. She collected herself, regained control, and has now recovered her health—and all her

beauty. Was there ever beauty greater than her's?"

"She is very beautiful—more than beautiful—she filled me with a kind of wonder. But tell me, won't she object to your having told me her secret?"

"It is not a secret; these things are not regarded as secrets; we hold it unworthy to blab of such things, but we never make an effort to conceal them. Often since then Iréné has spoken of Chairo in such a manner as to leave no doubt as to her feelings for him; and yet she has probably never in terms admitted it to anyone but me. In confiding to you my love for her, she would not complain at my also confiding to you her love for him."

Ariston's simplicity filled my heart with tenderness for him.

I went to him, put my hands on his shoulders, and said:

"I am sorry for you."

For a moment he seemed taken aback by this expression of sympathy; but when our eyes met his were dimmed. In a moment, however, he had recovered control, and said:

"It doesn't make any difference in one way. I see her still; and one of these days she will be

sorry for me and become my wife; she will then end by loving me. I mean to work to this end; the hope of attaining all this gives me courage."

It seemed all the worse to me that Ariston, with his gayety and humor, should be in his heart so sad. And yet, if it was to be, better that it should come to one who had a fund of joyousness within himself, on which he could draw.

The next day Lydia sent word to Ariston that she would like to see him, and Ariston suggested that I should go with him to the cloister. "I shall, of course," he said, "wish to see Lydia alone for a little, but you will have an opportunity of seeing the cloister and what they do there."

The cloister of Demeter and all the institutions which clustered around it were situated in the neighborhood of what was in my time Madison Square. All the buildings between Twentieth Street and Thirty-fourth Street, north and south, and between Sixth Avenue and Fourth Avenue, east and west, had been cleared away; and upon the cleared space had been constructed a building dedicated to the cult. The temple of Demeter, closely resembling the Pantheon, was surrounded by a grove of ilex trees. At a short distance from the temple and connected with it by a columned arcade, was the cloister, built also

of white marble, around a court carpeted with lawn; this cloister was the dwelling place of the priestesses of Demeter and of all those women who were either in retreat or in novitiate. A short distance from the cloister was a large building, similar to the other large buildings of which New York now mainly consisted. Twenty stories in height, covering acres of ground and built around a large open court, these buildings were no longer open to the objection alleged against them in my time, owing to the fact that they were now removed from one another by large spaces planted with trees. This particular building was devoted to the education of youth, and particularly all children who, for any reason, became what was termed "children of the state." The building was so large that it permitted of a running track within the court of four laps to the mile. New York had been transformed by the construction of these enormous buildings, each one of which constituted practically a city of itself. Some of them, such as the one in which I was living with Ariston, were devoted exclusively to bachelors and childless widowers; others were entirely for unmarried women and childless widows; others, on the contrary, were set aside for the use of families and consisted of apartments of different sizes.

Although the inmates of these buildings constantly met after the fulfillment of their daily task, every family had as separate a home as in my day. Almost every building had a dramatic corps of its own, a musical choir of its own, a football club, a tennis club, and other athletic, amusement, and educational clubs of its own, and all these clubs contributed to the amusement one of the other, each colony contributing its share to the enjoyment of the whole community.

Lydia was in the hospital ward of the state children's building, where at last we found her, for though in retreat she was by no means idle. She was not discountenanced when she saw us; nor would she even allow me to leave them, but told Ariston what she had to say simply and in a few words. It was this: She had come to the cloister, she said, very largely for the purpose of seeing Iréné there; she took it for granted that Iréné's duties at the temple would bring them together. Lydia feared, however, that Iréné was avoiding her, and wanted Ariston to arrange a meeting between them.

Ariston promised to do this, and then we all three walked through the buildings, Lydia taking great pride in her share of the work there.

Ariston did not find it easy to arrange this

meeting. Iréné freely confessed that she did not want to speak to Lydia at this moment; she was unwilling to give her reasons, but we both easily guessed them. Iréné, however, did not refuse to see Lydia and promised to go to her on the following day.

The following day was the first of the Eleusinian festival. In the daily rite, incense was offered to the goddess as a token of sacrifice, but at the Eleusinian festival there was added a note of thanksgiving to the rite, which substituted perfumes and flowers in lieu of incense. It was the privilege of Iréné to select from among the ministrants the one who was to hand her the gifts brought by the rest, and it was from the hand of the chosen one that Iréné took the gifts and laid them upon the altar.

On this opening day Iréné selected Lydia for this privilege, for she meant this joint ministration at the altar to serve as prelude and preparation for their meeting. The temple was crowded.

Lydia trembled a little as she followed Iréné to the altar; a priest stood on either side as the priestesses, postulants, and novices of the Demetrian procession went up the steps to it. Arrived at the foot of the altar they formed a group about it, dividing one-half on one side, the other half

on the other; between the altar and the body of the temple stood only Iréné and Lydia.

Lydia took the perfumes and handed them to Iréné, who sprinkled them first upon the altar, then upon the priests, and then toward the congregation; then she took the flowers, some of them in vases, others in wreaths, and handed them to Iréné, who arranged them upon the altar; when the last gift had been taken there Iréné kneeled and Lydia kneeled by her side. There was a deep silence in the temple. At this point in the ritual there was a pause, during which it was the privilege of the postulants and novices to have a prayer offered in case of special anxiety. Iréné, though unsolicited, at this moment offered the following prayer:

"Mother of Fruitfulness, to her who now asks for thy special grace, grant that she may neither accept thy mission hastily nor reject it without consideration; for thy glory, O Mother, is the glory of all thy people."

There was a word in this prayer which did not fail to strike the attention of every worshipper in the temple that day. The words of the ritual were "Grant that she may neither accept the mission *unworthily*." Iréné had substituted

"hastily" for the word "unworthily." She had paused at this word and given it special emphasis. It was usual for the Demetrian procession to remain kneeling after the service was over and the congregation dismissed; and it happened that the procession and the priests left the temple, leaving Iréné and Lydia alone there. For Iréné did not rise with the other Demetrians, and Lydia, feeling that she had been chosen as ministrant for a purpose, remained beside Iréné. The two knelt alone in the temple, Iréné praying and Lydia waiting on her. At last Iréné arose and Lydia also, and they both walked out into the covered way.

Neither spoke until they were in the seclusion of the cloistered court. Then Iréné said: "You wanted to speak to me, Lydia."

"And you have been avoiding me," said Lydia.

"Yes," answered Iréné. "You have a matter to decide regarding which you have already guessed I am not altogether unconcerned."

Lydia lowered her voice as she said: "You still love Chairo?"

Iréné answered in a voice still lower, but firm, "I do."

For a few minutes they paced the cloister.

Lydia was trying to decide how to confess her own secret, but she did not find the words. At last Iréné said:

"When the mission of Demeter was first tendered to me I was eighteen, and, although I had often preferred certain of my playmates to others, I had not known love. The honor of the mission made a great impression, and as it slowly came upon me that I was chosen to make of myself a sacrifice, the beauty of it filled my heart with happiness. It hardly occurred to me possible to refuse the mission; I was absorbed by one single desire—to make myself worthy of it. I thought very little about the sacrifice itself. I had the legend of Eros and Psyche in my mind; one day I should hear heavenly music and be approached as it were by an unknown god. And passing from the pagan to the Christian myth, I saw the Immaculate Conception of Murillo—that of the young maiden at the Prado in Madrid—and I felt lifted into the ecstasy of a mystic motherhood. So until I accepted the mission at the Eleusinian festival I lived in a rapture—the days passing in the studies and ministrations of our novitiate, the nights in dreamless sleep. But once the vows taken and the bridal night fixed, there came upon me a revulsion as it were from the outside and

took control of my entire being so as to make me understand what the ancients meant when they described certain persons as 'possessed by an evil spirit.' The thought of the approaching crisis was a pure horror to me. I lost my appetite and sleep; or, if I slept, it was to dream a nightmare. Neither our priest nor priestess could console me, the legend of Eros and Psyche became abominable, the Immaculate Conception absurd, and, believe me, Lydia, nothing but pride kept me to my word. It was a bad pride, the pride that could not look forward to the humiliation of refusing a sacrifice I had once accepted. That pride held me in a vice and accomplished what religion itself would never have accomplished."

Iréné paused—and Lydia passed her arm around Iréné's waist as they continued to pace the solitary cloister, whispering "Go on" in Iréné's ear.

"You know the rest," continued Iréné. "The unknown god came to me in my terror and converted my terror into love; and as I look back at it now I am struck by two things: One, how unaccountable and unfounded the terror was; the other, how little my pride would have sufficed to overcome it had the terror been enforced by love."

Lydia looked at Iréné askance.

"I mean," said Iréné, "love for some one else!"

A sigh broke from Lydia. This was what she had been waiting for.

"And you think," said Lydia, "that a woman should not accept the mission if she already loves?"

"I don't *think* it; I *know* it!"

Lydia felt a burden taken from her—the burden of doubt as well as the burden of sacrifice. But suddenly she remembered that Iréné in advising the refusal of the mission was making a sacrifice of her own love, and she said very low in Iréné's ear:

"But, Iréné, it's Chairo——"

"I know," answered Iréné, "and this is all the greater reason for refusing. Had you loved a lesser man you might have doubted the trueness of your love, but having loved Chairo once you can never cease to love him. I speak who know"; and Iréné turned on Lydia a look of immortal sorrow.

But the tumult of emotion in Lydia's heart could no longer be restrained. Her own great love for Chairo, her inability to sacrifice it, contrasted with the dignity of Iréné's renunciation, started a torrent of tears. She fell on Iréné's

neck and sobbed there. Iréné's strong heart beat against her's as they stood in close embrace under the cloister, and calmed Lydia. She slowly disengaged herself, and looking into Iréné's face, said:

"And so you tell me to refuse the mission?"

"You cannot do otherwise."

Then Lydia kissed Iréné and withdrew.

Lydia went to her chamber and sat in the window seat, looking across the lawn to the temple of Demeter.

What did it all mean? She had felt the beauty of the mission; had glowed at the thought of sacrifice; had taken pride in it. But such was the strength of her love for Chairo that so long as he was in her mind the mission seemed a sacrilege and her heart had responded to Iréné's advice with a bound of gratitude and delight. And yet now as she looked at the white columns of the temple at which she would never again be worthy to minister, an unutterable sadness came over her, as though she were parting from the dearest and most precious thing in her existence.

She was unwilling to mingle that night with the other novices, and retired without seeing them. The night was filled with conflicting dreams and she woke up next morning with the guilty conviction that she had committed a crime.

CHAPTER VI

NEAERA

MEANWHILE I was becoming acquainted with Lydia's family and their friends. They occupied a building extending from Fifth Avenue to Lenox Avenue and from 125th Street to 130th Street. It had a large cloistered court within which was a beautiful garden, consisting of a grove inclosing a lawn bordered by flowers. It was usual for the inmates of the building to meet for tea in the grove on the border of the lawn. They divided themselves into groups, each with his own arrangement of chairs, hammocks, and tables, which reminded me of some of our *fêtes champêtres*. Within the grove were openings for such games as tennis—of which they had an infinite variety—and also for stages on which they rehearsed concerts and plays. The hours between five and seven were by common consent surrendered to social amusements. At seven there was an adjournment to the swimming

bath and gymnasium with which every building was provided. Eight was the usual hour for dinner, this meal being usually reserved to the family; and the evening was spent very much as with us, either at some theater or at home. The dinner party was a thing almost unknown. In the first place, the principal meal, and the only one which required much preparation, was in the middle of the day. The evening meal at eight was never more than our high tea, the object of this system being to lighten domestic service. In the second place, the unmarried, who did not live with their families, generally dined together in the common hall; and if members of a family wished to dine at the common table they could at any time do so. Members of different families frequently dined at one another's domestic table but upon terms of intimacy; the conventional dinner party had become ridiculous, no one having the means or feeling the necessity to make a display. The more thrifty and the best managers, who were skillful at dressing food and chose to apply their leisure to securing exquisite wines, often entertained; but out of the hospitality that enjoys sharing good things with others, rather than the pride which seeks to impress a neighbor by ostentation of wealth.

I learned later that, although the conditions I have described still prevailed, the state was passing out of the pure Collectivism with which it started; that numerous factories had been started by private enterprise, partly to supply things not supplied by the state, partly because of dissatisfaction at state manufacture. Although private enterprise could only count on voluntary labor during one-half of every day it had already assumed vast proportions, had given rise to considerable private wealth and was modifying the social conditions that resulted from primitive Collectivism.

I also perceived that although many of the problems of life, such as pauperism and prostitution, had been solved by the introduction of Collectivism, nevertheless it had not brought that total disappearance of ill feeling which prophets of Collectivism had promised us in my time. On the contrary, I soon discovered that the inmates of every building were split up into cliques as devoted to gossip as in our day, the only difference being that they were determined by individual preference and political divisions and not by poverty or wealth; perhaps it might be said, that the absence of the wealth standard raised the level of the social struggle, deciding it by personal excellence and attractiveness, rather than along con-

ventional lines. Every man and woman knew that popularity—and even political influence—could be secured only by these, and this knowledge checked many an angry word and prompted many an act of kindness. Chaff, too, and even sallies of wit with a dash of malice in them were borne with more good humor than in our day; because we all of us love to laugh, and generally the more if it is at the expense of a neighbor, provided only there be no intention to wound; so that those who bore banter well were as popular as those who best could set it going.

And yet there were some very foolish and malicious people among them. I remember a foolish one particularly, 'Aunt Tiny they called her. She was an aunt of Lydia and Cleon. Lydia First, as Lydia's mother was called, had married twice. Her first husband had not known how to keep her love and they had separated after her first child was weaned. Then she had married a second time; her second husband was an excellent man but inferior to her; he had not been able to impress his personality nor his name upon the family, and so the children of the second marriage as well as the child of the first had taken the name of the mother. The second husband had died some years before the beginning of this story;

but a sister of his—Aunt Tiny—had remained attached to the family. She was very small and plump; her hair was of a sickly yellow color and so thin on the top of her head that the scalp was plainly visible; she wore a perpetual smile of self-satisfaction which expressed the essential feature of her character; it was impossible for her to entertain the thought that she was plain or unattractive; her happiness depended, on the contrary, upon the conviction that no one could resist her charms did she only decide to exercise them. Age did not dull this keen self-admiration; on the contrary, as the mirror told her that lengthening teeth contributed little to an already meaningless mouth, or wrinkles little to browless eyes, she felt the need of faith in herself grow the more, and her efforts by seductive glances to elicit from others the expression of regard so indispensable to her happiness redoubled.

I first saw her in Lydia's drawing-room. I had found it empty on entering, but presently there came into it a little body with a hand stretched up, in her eagerness to be cordial, at the level of her head, and behind it a smirking face bubbling over with the effort of maidenly reserve to keep within bounds an overflowing heart.

"Welcome to New York!" she said. "I'm *so* glad to see you!"

She lisped a little, and as she emphasized the word "*tho*" she shook her head in a little confiding way, and the smirk deepened into a nervous grin.

I had been so long in New York that I felt her welcome a little superfluous, but it was part of the doctrine, which kept her happiness alive, that New York had not completed a welcome to a stranger until it had been expressed by her.

I was a little confused by her effusiveness, for I did not wish to offend an aunt of Lydia's, and yet I felt it impossible to respond in proper proportion to her advances.

"You must be Aunt Tiny," I said. "I have often heard of you."

I refrained from telling her what I had heard; how she had constituted one of the favorite types for Ariston's mimicry; how, indeed, Ariston had gone through the very performance I had just witnessed, in which the uplifted hand, the smirk, and the lisping "*tho*" had lost nothing in Ariston's art.

"Dear Lydia!" she exclaimed; and in the pronunciation of the "d" in "dear" she put exaggerated significance and added a shake of her

head. She wore little corkscrew curls; every time she shook her head the curls quivered with suppressed agitation.

"Do sit down," she added—with unnecessary emphasis in the "do."

There was nothing to be done but to resign myself; she drew up a chair quite close to mine and settled down in it as an army might settle down for a Trojan siege.

"Do tell me—I am dying to know—how did it happen and what do you think of us? You don't look very different from us; you remind me of Chairo, and he is thought *very* handsome"—her head and curls shook again and she giggled consciously—"*very*, *very* handsome!" She giggled still more and her eyes assumed a coy meaningfulness that increased my discomfort.

I have never been able to understand why this poor little woman—perfectly innocent of any real ability to harm—should have been able to cause me so much annoyance; but there was something in her glance that made me wish to throw things at her.

"And Lydia—isn't Lydia beautiful?" There was something caressing in her tone as she puckered up her lips and dwelt on the word "beautiful" that exasperated me again.

"What *do* you suppose she is going to do? *Is* she going to accept the mission or marry Chairo? She is a great flirt, you know; quite a terrible flirt! But *I* shouldn't talk of flirting!"—and she giggled again the same suggestive giggle. "*We* mustn't be hard on flirts, must we?"

This appeal to me, as though I were already *particeps criminis*, would have led me to protest, but she did not allow me the opportunity, for she continued:

"But she has not been fair to Chairo; a girl ought to know when to make up her mind"—she became very serious now—"*I* always knew where to stop; no man ever had the right to reproach *me*."

I at last could agree with her and I smiled approval. She seemed delighted.

"I am sure we are going to be great friends, and you will never misunderstand me, will you?"

I protested that I never would, and was relieved by the entrance of Lydia First, who suggested our going to tea in the grove.

On our way there as we passed the main entrance a detachment of militia—some dozen or so—entered, divided into two columns, and stood at arms while between them passed a woman somewhat more heavily draped than usual. I asked

the meaning of this, and was told that she was a Demetrian.

"But why the military escort?" asked I.

"Demetrians are always attended by an escort unless they particularly desire to be spared the honor; many would avoid it but the cult dispenses with it only as a special favor and for a limited time."

"I cannot see the use of it," lisped Aunt Tiny.

But Lydia First looked sadly at her, and turning to me, said:

"All of us do not understand the importance of upholding the dignity of the cult. It is the very key-stone of social order and we cannot pay too much honor to those by whose sacrifice it is preserved."

We were joined at the grove by quite a party; Ariston came later; and among others I remarked a young girl with bright black eyes who was described to me as a journalist. It took me some time to become accustomed to their habit of describing a person's occupation as that adopted for recreation. The work they did for the state was not regarded as a matter of particular concern; it was the work they selected for their leisure hours which marked their character and bent. Neaera had been first attached to the official journal of

the state; but she had joined Chairo's political party and her work on the journal betrayed her partisanship, so the state assigned her work in a factory, and she devoted her leisure therefore to the paper edited by Chairo.

As leader of the opposition Chairo was, by an established tradition, relieved of all work for the state. Every political party representing a designated proportion of the voters of the state could elect a certain number of representatives upon the plan of minority representation, and the leaders of the opposition were by virtue of such election released from working for the state. No law had enacted this, but it had become the rule by the operation of the principle of *noblesse oblige*. The representatives who neither belonged to the ministry nor were recognized as leaders of the opposition did not enjoy this privilege, except during the sessions of the legislature. But it was recognized that the minority parties in opposition had as much work to do as the party in power, and public opinion approved the plan which gave to the recognized leaders of these parties the greatest opportunity possible for exercising vigilance. The number of these leaders being small, there was no fear that the plan would give rise to idleness on a scale to be feared, and the temptation of

the government to annoy leaders of the opposition by the allotment to them of onerous tasks, or that of ascribing such motives to the government, was thereby eliminated.

So Chairo had his whole time free for the organization of his so-called Radical party, and he published, with the assistance of his supporters, a paper entitled *Liberty*, to which Neaera devoted all her spare time. She was uncommonly pretty, but like all these women, was capable of sudden changes of face and manner which, until I became accustomed to it, constantly surprised me; though, indeed, I remember having noticed it in some of the women of my own day whom we described then as "advanced." Neaera was already seated at a small tea table with a young man called Balbus, also a member of the *Liberty* staff, when we arrived and was engaged in earnest conversation with him. She looked at me scrutinizingly when I was presented to her, neither rising nor offering me her hand, and acknowledged the presentation only by a little conventional smile. There was something that seemed to me ill-bred in her keeping her seat when Lydia First and the rest of us arrived; but I soon discovered that Neaera was a person of no small importance, and expected attention from others which she did not herself

concede. Our party seated itself about an adjoining table and presently Neaera called to me:

"Xenos, are you going to lecture at our hall?"

I had been invited by the Pater to lecture on the social, political, and economic conditions of the twentieth century. He had assumed that such a lecture would tend to strengthen the conservative and collectivist government; and Chairo had asked me to lecture at his hall in the hope, on the contrary, that it could be made to serve his own cause. I had been told that these lectures were usually followed by an open discussion, and I knew that it was from this discussion that both parties hoped to draw arguments to sustain their views respectively. Fearing, therefore, to become involved in their political animosities I had not yet decided whether I would lecture or not, so I answered:

"I am not sure; I feel a little the need of understanding your own conditions better than I do, before undertaking to contrast them with those of our day."

"We'll undertake to explain our conditions," she said, with an oblique smile at Balbus, "if you'll let us."

"I could wish for no pleasanter instruction," I answered.

"But I see you have Aunt Tiny," retorted she maliciously.

"Oh, I haven't taken him in hand yet," said Aunt Tiny, taking the suggestion *au grand sérieux,* "but," she added encouragingly, "I will! I will!"

Balbus threw his head back and laughed outrageously.

"What are you laughing at, you goose!" said Neaera.

"Let him laugh and enjoy himself," answered Aunt Tiny quickly, by way of discarding the thought that there could be in his laughter anything disobliging for herself.

And Balbus, taking the cue, said:

"We don't want Aunt Tiny to take you in hand for she is terribly persuasive"—the poor little thing giggled delightedly—"and we want you on our side."

"I don't mean to be on either side," I answered. "I am your guest, and, as such, must confine myself to stating facts; you will have to draw your own conclusions."

"That's right," said Neaera. "All we want are facts; the conclusion will be clear enough.

For example, in your time, every man could choose his own occupation."

"Undoubtedly," answered I.

"And was not subjected to the humiliation of working in a factory because he would not be convenient to the party in control!" flashed out Neaera.

I nodded my head gravely in approval.

"Imagine any of the writers of your day compelled to work in a factory—Emerson, Browning, Longfellow!—and Tennyson—imagine Tennyson working in a factory!"

"Abominable!" responded Balbus. "Abominable and absurd!"

"Wasn't Burns a plough-boy?" said Ariston, "And Shakespeare a play-actor?"

"A second-rate play-actor, too," echoed Lydia First, "and ended by lending money at usurious interest!"

"He chose to be that," retorted Balbus. "What we are fighting for is the right to choose our calling."

"But haven't you chosen yours?" asked I. "Isn't journalism of your choosing?"

"But I have to work at the state factory at the bidding of the state," answered Balbus, "for half of every day."

I could not help comparing his lot with my own in Boston. I had never enjoyed the practice of law; indeed, I had adopted the profession because my father had a practice to hand down to me. And as I sat day after day listening to the often fancied grievances of my clients, their petty ambitions, narrow animosities, and, particularly in divorce cases, to the nasty disputes of their domestic life, I often felt as though my profession converted me into a sort of moral sewer into which every client poured his contribution. Had I really been free when I chose to devote my whole life to so pitiful a business!

"Some part of the day," I answered, thinking aloud, "must, I suppose, be devoted to the securing of food and clothing. In the savage state—in which some people contend liberty is most complete—the whole day is practically devoted to it. In our state it was much the same, except that a few were exempt because they made the many work for them. But only a very few enjoyed the privilege of idleness—or shall we call it 'liberty'?"

"No," answered Neaera, "it is quite unnecessary to confuse things; liberty is one thing and idleness is another. We want the liberty to choose our work—not the license to refuse it."

"Liberty, then," said Ariston, "is *our* license; and license is other people's liberty!"

"Ingenious," retorted Neaera, "but not correct. Can't you see the difference between choosing work and refusing it?"

"Certainly," answered Ariston. "The work I should *choose* would be lying on my back and 'thinking delicate thoughts,' like Hecate. The work I should refuse would be factory work, like *you*."

Neaera did not like to find herself without an answer; so she covered her defeat by taking a flower out of her bosom and throwing it at Ariston, who, picking it up, kissed it and fastened it to a fold of his chiton. Just then a strain, that reminded me of our negro melodies, being wafted to us through the trees, Balbus exclaimed, "Now, Neaera, a dance!"

She sprang up at once and began moving rhythmically to the music. It was a strange and beautiful dance, that had in it some of the quaint movement of a negro breakdown, and yet the gayety and grace of a Lydian measure.

Balbus clapped his hands to accentuate the broken time, and we all joined him; Neaera, stimulated by a murmur of applause, gave a significance to her movements; danced up to Ariston,

then flinging her hands out at him in mock aversion, danced away again; next reversing her step danced back to him, and, snatching the flower out of his chiton, tripped triumphantly off, throwing her head up in elation; and to increase Ariston's spite she made as though she would give it to Balbus; but upon his holding out his hand for it, danced away from him, and after raising hopes in others of our group by tentative movements in one direction and another, finally fixed her bright eyes on me, danced hither and thither as though uncertain, and then finally brought it to me, and daintily pressing it to her lips, put it with both hands and a pretty air of resolution into mine.

CHAPTER VII

A TRAGIC DENOUEMENT

LYDIA could not disembarrass herself of the feeling of guilt with which she awoke after her interview with Iréné. She went to the temple for help and knelt before the story of Demeter's sorrows, which was told in sweeping frescoes on its walls. Chance so happened that she found herself before that part of the story which described the goddess forgetting her own sorrow in her devotion to the sick child of the woodman in his hut. The artist, in the reaction from the Greek method of treating this story which marked the narrative of Ovid as contrasted with that of Homer, had dwelt upon the humble conditions of the poor hut in which the light of Demeter's golden hair shone like a beneficent aureole; and the nascent maternal instinct in Lydia vibrated to the beauty of Demeter's task. Was she to renounce this highest standard of maternity? What though she did love Chairo,

was it not this very love which the goddess bade her renounce? And was not the greater the love the nobler the sacrifice?

She returned to the cloister weary with the struggle and strove to forget it by devoting herself to the duties of the hospital. As she cared for a sick child there, the fresco in the temple before which she had that morning kneeled came back to her, and in the memory of that hour and in the love that went out to the child she was nursing she found consolation.

But perhaps she was most influenced by a certain capacity for passive resistance in her, which unconsciously set her upon opposing the inclination to yield, whether to her love for Chairo or to the pleading of the priest. She could refuse to yield to both more easily than decide to yield to either. And so, many days passed in the valley of indecision before she was lifted out of it by an unexpected event.

A novice came to her one morning and bade her go to Iréné, who had asked for her. She had not seen Iréné since the day they had spoken in the cloister and she had wondered; but something in her had secretly been satisfied. Iréné would have challenged her to decide, and this was just what she was not prepared to do.

As she followed the novice to Iréné's rooms the novice had told her that Iréné was very ill and had moaned all night, begging for Lydia. Inquiry elicited that Iréné was threatened and perhaps was actually suffering from congestion of the brain, and that she had been confined to her rooms ever since she had ministered with Lydia in the temple. When Lydia approached Iréné's rooms a nurse stopped her by saying that Iréné had just fallen into a sleep—the first for a fortnight—and must not be awakened. So Lydia remained in the sitting room, peeping occasionally through the curtain that separated it from the room in which Iréné slept. For many hours Iréné remained motionless, but at last as Lydia stood holding aside the curtain, Iréné opened her eyes; her face was flushed; she sprang up in her bed, leaning on one hand, and glared at Lydia with eyes that lacked discourse of reason. Then, suddenly, she seemed to recognize her and a shriek rent the room and sent Lydia staggering back against the nurse who stood behind her. Putting both her hands over her eyes and ears Lydia dropped the curtain between herself and the raving Iréné; but no hand could keep her from hearing the words that came through the curtain and pierced her brain:

"Go away! Go away!" shrieked Iréné. "You have taken him from me! Stolen him!"

Iréné's shriek sounded to Lydia like the crack of doom. Then came the words, "Stolen him," in the voice of the accusing angel—and as if it were in answer to her own shrinking gesture of protest behind the curtain, she heard Iréné shriekingly repeat: "Stolen, yes, stolen!"

The nurse put Lydia into a chair and went to Iréné; she found her risen from the bed, and, shrouded in her curtain of blue-black hair, with lunatic eyes, she was advancing slowly to the room where Lydia sat. When Iréné saw the nurse she said, in low grave accents, "Not you—not you!" and then with menacing significance added, almost in a whisper, "The other!"

The nurse tried to stop her and urge her back to her bed, but Iréné swept her away with a single movement of her arm, and moved to the curtain which separated her from Lydia. But Lydia had by this time recovered control of herself; she knew that a maniac was approaching and she arose to await her. Iréné pushed aside the curtain and confronted Lydia standing in the middle of the room, motionless and rigid as though changed to stone.

"Don't stand there, brazen-faced!" shrieked Iréné. "Kneel—I say, kneel!"

But Lydia stood her ground unflinchingly.

Then Iréné burst into a furious laugh: "Great mother," she began mockingly, and Lydia had to stand and listen while the maniac, with lurid eyes and frantic gesture, recited the most sacred of the prayers to Demeter—the prayer in which daily the vestal repeats her vows; but as the prayer came to a close the light went out of Iréné's eyes, the fury out of her gesture; she slowly bent down upon her knees, and the last words of the prayer were, in a voice sinking to a whisper, addressed to Lydia as though she had been the goddess herself.

When Iréné's voice died away it seemed as though the paroxysm was over; she remained kneeling, with her head bowed upon her breast.

Then Lydia thought to lift her up, and bent down to her. Iréné looked up suddenly and shrieked as she recognized Lydia; she frantically waved her hands before her face as though to rid her eyes of the spectacle, and Lydia resumed her erect posture again.

By this time the nurse had returned to the room and tried to lead Iréné away. At first she succeeded, but suddenly Iréné swept her away, and confronted Lydia again:

"It hurts here," she said, clutching at her

heart. "You'll know," she added, and laughed harshly. "You'll know!" she repeated, and throwing up her hands she clutched the air; then in an agony of paroxysm she whispered again in a faltering voice, "You'll know"—and suddenly sank a huddled heap upon the floor.

Lydia and the nurse ran to her and lifted her back upon the bed, and from that moment Lydia did not leave her side. For many days life hovered on the edge of Iréné's lips, sometimes appearing to take flight altogether, and again returning to reanimate the clay. And Lydia with anguish in her heart bent over her night and day.

At last a crisis came and Iréné fell into a profound and restful sleep; the fever left her, and the pulse slowly recovered regularity and strength; she seemed to recognize no one, and it was expected that for some weeks she would probably remain unaware of those around her. Lydia was advised to absent herself, lest to Iréné, on recovering her reason, the shock of seeing Lydia prove dangerous; and so, one evening as the sun set, her strength shattered, she returned to her own rooms.

It happened that the following day was the ninth of the Eleusinian festival, on which, if at all, those to whom the mission had been tendered might accept or renounce it. Strange to say, with

her waning strength ebbed also the power of passive resistance which had kept Lydia from decision; she surrendered not to the exercise of a controlling will but to the suggesting influence of Iréné's anguish; and on the next day in the temple, to the rage of some and to the deep concern of all, in the procession she wore the yellow veil which announced her as a bride of Demeter.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE CULT WAS FOUNDED

BEFORE the dramatic climax of the Eleusinian festival, the first incident of which closed the last chapter, and the thrilling sequel of which I shall have later to narrate, I had become, in spite of myself, dragged deeper into the political arena than I wished.

In the first place I had not remained an unmoved spectator of Neaera's dance. It was very new to me and altogether bewitching. She had a faultless figure—or, if it had a fault, what it took away from the type of ideal beauty it perhaps added to her feminine attractiveness. And so, on returning with Ariston to our bachelor quarters she was the theme of our conversation. Ariston had passed through a phase of *tendresse* for Neaera. Most of his generation who were of Neaera's class had experienced her novitiate. Even Chairo had not returned unscathed. We found him at the bath, and after a plunge into the

bracing sea water we lounged in our wraps on the couches prepared for that delightful moment.

Chairo declined to take Neaera seriously: "'Il y des gens,'" he said, "'qui sont le luxe de la race.' She is a sprite created to awake sentiments which must be satisfied by others; or, perhaps, remain unsatisfied, and thus stimulate the brush of the painter and the pen of the poet. She is an artist herself; utterly without conscience or heart; but contributing greatly to the charm of life, and if not taken in too heavy doses, altogether delightful."

Ariston was more severe! "She is a calculating little minx with her own ends to serve; sometimes those ends are good and she secures a large following by virtue of them; sometimes they are altogether bad, and then she uses the following secured by her good ends to attain the bad. But the worst of it is, she uses what she has of charm remorselessly and has more than once been summoned before the priests of Demeter."

"That is no discredit," retorted Chairo. "The whole band of priests ought to be consigned to the shades. They are an unmitigated curse——"

It was no easy matter to understand the working of the priestly system but I gathered this from the discussion. According to Ariston, the cult of

Demeter was organized mainly through the influence of the women to accomplish a reform in the marriage system and an intelligent, scientific, and religious regulation of all sexual relations. The evils to be remedied were threefold: To reconcile continence with love; to retain the sanctity of marriage without imposing a life penalty for a single innocent mistake; and to secure, without compulsion, the improvement of the race.

In regard to the first of these three, it was recognized that no one function in the human body contributed so much to the health or malady of the race as this; and that free love, which had constituted one of the planks of the Socialist party, would be fatal to the survival of the community, in consequence of the physical and moral abuses to which incontinence would give rise. The survival of the races which practised continence over those which did not practise it was too clearly recorded in history for its lesson to be neglected. Thus, the promiscuous savage disappears before the savage who exercises the continence, however slight, involved in metronymic institutions; these last disappear before the races which exercise the higher degree of continence required by the patriarchal or polygamous system; and these last succumb in the conflict with those which practise the

highest degree of continence, known in our day under the name of monogamy. The lesson of history, then, is that continence is essential to the progress of the race. The problem consists in defining continence.

This could not be done by written laws; the attempt to regulate sexual relations by law had broken down in my own day. Divorce was the attempt of morality to rescue marriage from promiscuousness. The greatest immorality prevailed where divorce was forbidden; in other words, the institution of marriage became a screen for immorality; women took the vow of marriage only the easier to break it, and even those who took it with the sincere intention of being faithful to it, once the bond proved intolerable, finding no moral escape from it adopted the only immoral alternative. Divorce, therefore, was the only escape; and the easier divorce became the more did the sanctity of marriage diminish; so that at last it became impossible to decide which system resulted in more demoralization—the one which maintaining a theoretically indissoluble marriage resulted in secret promiscuousness, or the one which through divorce by making marriage easily dissoluble opened the door wide to the satisfaction of every caprice.

The only force that has ever seemed able to cope with this problem is religion. Religion for centuries filled convents and monasteries with men and women who under a mistaken morality offered love as a sacrifice to God; religion has been the determining factor in the survival of community life; that is to say, those communities which were animated by religion—such as Shakers, and the conventual orders—have relatively prospered, whereas those which were not animated by religion have rapidly disappeared. Religion effectually preserves the chastity of women, even outside of convents—as in Ireland—and has been the main prop of such continence as survived during our time in the institution of marriage. Religion, then, seemed to be the only human sentiment that could determine continence, and to some religious institution, therefore, it was thought this question must be referred.

What actually happened was this: The constitutional convention, which put an end to the old order of things and brought in the new, was controlled by the Socialist faction which believed in free love; a provision, therefore, was inserted in the constitution forbidding all laws on the subject of marriage. The same constitution, however, provided that all adults over the age of

twenty-five years who had passed the necessary examinations—female as well as male—should have a vote; and this last gave women a voice in political matters, which they soon exercised with unexpected solidarity. They became a power in the state, and threatened a modification of the constitution on the subject of marriage, which would not only restore it to its original inflexibility, but would impose penalties on both sexes for violation of the marriage vow, such as the world had not up to that time seen or dreamed of. The whole community was aghast at the conflict between the sexes to which this question gave rise, and all the more so, that women had become a fighting power that could no longer be disregarded. The drill introduced into the schools for both sexes had demonstrated that in marksmanship the average woman was quite equal to the average man, and in ability to endure pain she proved altogether superior to him. Already the licentiousness that prevailed in Louisiana and the adjacent States between Louisiana and the Atlantic seaboard had given rise to a civil war; and the women of the North had fought on the side of sexual morality in a manner that opened the eyes of men to the existence of a new and formidable power in the state. The issue upon which Louisiana had under-

taken to secede was upon the power of the federal Government to enact penal laws against idleness. Obviously, idleness is, under a Collectivist government, a most dangerous offence. Collectivism cannot survive except upon the theory that all the members of the community furnish their quota of work. It was supposed that this question could be left to state legislation; and during a few generations every state did secure enough work from its citizens to furnish the stipulated amount of produce to the common store. But as dissoluteness prevailed in the South, the Southern States fell more and more behind in their contribution, and their failure was obviously due to the demoralization which attended promiscuity in sexual relations. In the Northern States a certain sense of personal dignity had created a public opinion on the subject, that prevented free love from producing its worst results; habits of industry, too, already existed there, and the creation of state farm colonies—such as existed in our day in Holland—where the unwilling were made to work prevented idleness from prevailing. In the Southern States, the climate lent itself to all the abuses that attend the surrender of self-control; the women never possessed the initiative necessary for defense; the more the men abandoned them-

selves to pleasure the less they were able either to govern or to tolerate government; and, as a necessary consequence, there was a relaxation of effort in every direction whether political, industrial, or domestic.

Much agitation prevailed in the rest of the Union over the condition of the South; the women, particularly, fearing that the contagion would spread, banded together to form purity leagues, with a view to meet the evil by a system of social ostracism; but before the sexual issue came to a head, the failure of the Southern States to furnish their quota to the common store raised an economic issue easier to handle. The federal Government passed a measure providing that in case any State failed to furnish its quota, the President was to replace the elected governor by one appointed by himself, and the whole penal administration was to pass into federal hands, with power to the federal Government to create pauper colonies and administer them. This aroused the ferocity of the whole Southern people, and it was at this crisis that the women of the North showed their prowess and initiative. They formed regiments which rivaled those of the men in number, and even compared with them in efficiency. The seceding States proved utterly unable to resist the

forces of the North, and were soon reduced to unconditional surrender.

In the period of reconstruction which followed this civil war, there came to the front in Concord a woman of singular ability, who united the mystic power of the founders of all religions with a personal beauty that made of her the model of the great sculptor of that day—Phocas. She early developed a faculty for divining thought, which secured for her the wonder and awe of the entire neighborhood; and when upon reaching maturity Phocas took her as his model for a statue of Demeter, she entered into the spirit of his work and the spirit of his work entered into her. The statue was his masterpiece, and was moved from city to city until, coupled as it soon was with the personality of Latona—for so the new priestess styled herself—it became the center of a veritable cult. It drew the minds of men to the old Greek worship of Fertility and Death in the personalities of Demeter and Persephone, so that Fertility became dignified by Death, and Death disarmed by Fertility—both merging, as it were, into a notion of immortality dear to the hopes of men. The golden ear of corn that figured in the radiant tresses of Demeter was shadowed by the death in the dark earth that awaits it, and thus became to

them an emblem of the annual resurrection of the spring with its promise of a new after-life for man also.

To Latona the quality of the Greek myth most worthy of commemoration was the spirit of sacrifice, which made of Demeter the Mater Dolorosa of the ancient world. The mother seeking her ravished daughter through all the kingdoms of the world, wresting her at last from the dark god —but for a season only—and during the season of sorrow and solitude finding compensation in caring for the sick child of a woodman in a forest hut—here was a myth for which Latona could stand and through which she could draw men to learn the lesson of progress and happiness through sacrifice. The long hours she spent with Phocas in the study of these things and the strength of his genius inspired her with a love for the man as well as for his art; but as the thought that she was born to a mission slowly dawned upon her she withdrew from his companionship, as, indeed, from the companionship of her neighbors; performed the tasks she owed the state with punctiliousness, and gathered about her a few women who responded to her exalted ideas. Her love for Phocas, about which all her earthly life centered, became to her the consummate sacrifice that

she could make to this new religion that was slowly taking shape in her. She drew her votaries chiefly from the conventual order that had gathered about the great cathedral on Morningside Heights; for the Christian religion had experienced a great change since the revolution. The Christian Church, released from the necessity of worldly consideration of wealth, was now sustained by those only who sincerely believed in her principles; and as soon as the city had been rebuilt to suit the new conditions, those who had contributed their leisure to the beautifying of the streets, turned their attention to the neglected foundations on the Heights. They found in the new Christian spirit something of the enthusiasm of the thirteenth century, and ridding the creed of all save the principle of love which Christ had made the foundation of His church, set themselves to embodying this principle with its mystic consequences of sacrifice into gothic arch and deep-stained glass, upon a scale and design heretofore never accomplished. Abandoning the transitional style at first contemplated, they adopted the general scheme of Chartres; but in lieu of the almost discordant steeples of Chartres they substituted a design taken rather from what is left of St. Jean, at Soissons, varying in height

and detail, but identical in style, stimulating wonder without shocking it. The entrance porches of the western façade were inspired by Rheims and Bourges, for there were five of them; the nave and choir towered to the heights of Beauvais; and in the center rose the spire of Salisbury. The lateral steeples flanking the north and south approaches were completed with the same bewildering variety as on the west front, and the apse, where rested the sanctuary, terminated the story with a cluster of chapels that equaled, if not excelled, the *chevet* of Le Mans; and so every part of this tribute to Christ lifted itself up in adoration to heaven like a flame. It rose from a green sward, and adjoining it, on the north side, was a cloister that in the hush of its seclusion brought back hallowed recollections of a bygone age.

It was from this cloister that Latona drew her following; for Latona, with her thoughts turned to Eleusis and not to Galilee, conceived of a worship which—though sorrow had a part in it—partook also of joy and thanksgiving; sacrifice assuredly, but for the happiness of this world, rather than for its mortification; an after life also, but an after life for which preparation in this world might through the great unselfishness of a few assure the happiness of the many. So that

while sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice had become the underlying principle of the Christian religion, sacrifice for the making of joy became the central idea of the new cult. And Latona, as indeed every mystic, the more she dwelt upon these things, the more she grew to believe in her mission; she began by dreaming dreams and ended by seeing visions; she found that fasting and asceticism contributed to lengthen and strengthen the moments when, losing consciousness of this world, she seemed to find herself in direct communion with the divine. Her body soon showed the traces of her spiritual life; she lost her beauty, but in the place of it came a happiness so radiant that as she walked in the streets to her allotted task it caused men and women to stand and wonder.

Meanwhile, her fame grew apace. But her personality was at first far more impressive than her cult. The one was clear and striking, the other vague and even obscure. At last on a day that afterward became the great festival of the Demetrian calendar, Latona fell into an ecstasy that lasted from the rising of the sun to the setting. She spent it on her knees, in adoration; rigid and motionless, with her hands held out as though upon a cross; none of those about her dared intrude; when darkness came she swooned,

and those watching lifted her to her couch. For a week she lay as it were unconscious. Then she gathered her votaries about her, and for the first time clearly enunciated her gospel to the world. This done, a strange sickness came upon her, she was, as it were, consumed by the fire of her inspiration; she wasted away, and with her dying breath asked that what was left of her be placed in an alembic, the gases into which her body passed be burned and the flame, so lit, be never extinguished.

And it was done. The corpse of Latona gave birth to a new vestal fire tended by new vestals, vowed no longer to barrenness, but to fertility and sacrifice.

Her words were preserved by many of her votaries, but their stories varied, as must indeed all such records vary in a world where minds differ as much as inclinations. But the central idea remained and gave rise to a cult which, unsupported by the state or by law, acquired control over the minds of men, much as did the papacy in the eleventh century. Some, as Ariston, believed it to be founded on reason, but dreaded its power and increase; others, as Chairo, regarded it as an unmitigated despotism. The issue was to be fought out—as, indeed, such issues generally are

—through the conflict between personal passions and political beliefs, each using and abusing the other and out of both emerging, after the appeasement to which every struggle eventually tends, into a clearer idea and a popular verdict.

Meanwhile, the followers of Latona had built the temple of Demeter on the old classic lines, and the solemn grove about the temple had not detracted from the cathedral close, perhaps because each cult appealed to different temperaments; perhaps, also, because many found that the two cults appealed to the different sides of character and to the different demands of each.

The cult, though unsupported by any law or statute, had acquired extraordinary power in the state. It undertook to summon before its council all persons charged with offenses against Demeter —Demeter standing amongst other things for the purity of domestic life. If the party summoned refused to appear before the council, the matter was referred to the attorney general, who, under the influence of the cult, prosecuted the charge in the criminal courts with the utmost severity; and whether the person accused was convicted or not, a refusal to appear before the council resulted in a social ostracism so complete that few ventured to incur it. If, on the other hand, the party

charged appeared before the council, the case was likely to be treated with leniency, and conviction seldom resulted in more than the imposing of some penitential task. Should it, however, appear that the charge was more serious than could be dealt with by the cult, it was referred to the attorney general.

The cult was careful to abstain from any act or teaching which could tend to encourage idolatry or superstition; thus, the statue of Latona, which had first inspired the Demetrian idea, was not placed in the temple where it might be thought properly to belong, but in the cloister. The temptation to worship it, therefore, was removed. Indeed, it was for the purpose of making the worship of a graven image the more impossible that Latona had asked that her body be consumed and the flame from it perpetuated on the altar. A flame could remain an emblem; it could hardly itself, in our day, ever become an object of worship.

In this way was kept alive the idea that the divine, wherever else it might also exist, exists certainly within each and every one of us, and that by the cultivation of love and usefulness it can be made to prosper and increase in us. For men, the active scope of usefulness lay chiefly in

the field of labor; for women, chiefly in the field of fertility—neither field excluding the other—but rather both including all. And so women contributed labor, in so far as labor did not impair their essential function of motherhood, and men contributed continence as the highest male duty in the field of fertility.

The duties of the male, therefore, were grouped into two classes, active and passive; the former were for the most part exercised in willingness to labor for the commonwealth without too grasping a regard for reward; the latter consisted mainly in continence, carefully itself distinguished from abstention—for it was a cardinal maxim of the Demetrian faith—as old, indeed, as the days of Aristotle—that human happiness could but be attained by conditions that permitted the due exercise of *all* human functions, each according to its laws. Science therefore came to the rescue of human happiness by determining the laws of human functions; and art completed its work by creating an environment which to the highest degree possible enabled every man and woman to exercise all their functions with wisdom, moderation, and delight, to the best happiness of all and the ultimate advancement of the race.

And although the future of the race was forever present to the priests of the cult, yet were men and women not expected to make any great sacrifice beyond the immediate generations that succeeded them, the institution of marriage being carefully maintained because it kept alive the care of the parent, each for its own offspring, thus providing for every generation the protection furnished by paternal pride and maternal solicitude.

The purity of the domestic hearth, its reverential care of offspring, the lifting of motherhood out of the irreligion of caprice into the religion of sacrifice; the exercise in all these matters of the highest, because the most difficult, of all the virtues—moderation—these are the special concerns of the Demetrian cult.

CHAPTER IX

HOW IT MIGHT BE UNDERMINED

THE discussion of these matters by Ariston and Chairo elicited an old story which was to receive its sequel in my time and it is important, therefore, to narrate it.

It seems that the year before my arrival among them Neaera had encouraged the addresses of a certain Harmes—a brother of Anna of Ann, and that Harmes was accused by her of having become so ungovernable that it had given rise to a public prosecution. Harmes had been convicted and confined to a farm colony, where he was still serving his term. The incident had given rise to much vexation of spirit, for many felt that Harmes was more sinned against than sinning.

The account Ariston gave of the matter was greatly to Neaera's discredit; according to him, Neaera originally had designs on Chairo, and he seemed willing enough to enjoy her society. Much thrown together, both by politics and journalism, it was not unnatural that their compan-

ionship should often extend itself into their hours of leisure. But Chairo was far too clear-sighted not to perceive the capriciousness and duplicity of his collaborator, and Neaera wasted her efforts upon him.

Of this, however, she could never be convinced and she returned to the charge over and over again. During one of the interludes she happened to meet Harmes and took a liking to the freshness of his youth; he became infatuated with her, and one evening he visited her at her apartment on an occasion when Neaera's mother was absent and she was therefore alone. It seems the young couple remained together so late into the evening that Neaera on the following day, fearing that a rumor of the visit might reach Chairo to her disadvantage, complained of Harmes's violence. Harmes, with a devotion to Neaera of which Ariston did not think her worthy, refused to defend himself against the charge. It is probable the matter would have dropped had not some enemies of Neaera taken the matter up, believing that, if prosecuted, Harmes would not refuse to vindicate himself and injure Neaera.

The charge had therefore been brought first before the Demetrian council; and the council, on the same theory as that adopted by Neaera's ene-

mies, and convinced that Neaera would be punished, put the matter into the hands of the attorney general. Harmes's silence, however, only served to vindicate Neaera and convict himself; and the community was still undecided as to which was the culprit and which the victim.

I had an opportunity myself of forming an opinion on the subject, for shortly after my conversation with Ariston and Chairo I received an intimation from Neaera that she would like to see me at the office of the *Liberty* staff, and upon going there at the hour mentioned I found Neaera busily engaged writing in a room that suggested other things than labor; for it was furnished with more luxury than was usual, and there were richly upholstered divans in it laden with piles of eider-down pillows; the air, too, was heavy with perfume.

Neaera, however, received me with her brow contracted; she was working at an editorial, and I evidently interrupted the flow of her thought; but the frown very soon passed away from her forehead, and standing up a little impatiently she flung her pen down on the table.

"There!" she said, "I am glad you have come; I need rest."

She threw herself on the divan, and I could

not help thinking as she lay there that the Greek dress was less open to criticism in the fields and open air than in a closed room. In town the longer mantle was worn which came down to the feet; but the clinging drapery displayed the lines of the figure in a manner to which I felt uncomfortably unaccustomed.

"I sent for you," said she, "to speak to you seriously about this lecture you are to give. Your views may have an important bearing and you ought to know the evils of our system if you are to compare them with the old."

"I am impressed," answered I, "with certain things—such as the absence of poverty, the relative well-being of all; and this seems to me so important that I am inclined perhaps to undervalue the price you pay for them——"

"The price—that is it—the terrible price; we are subjected to a despotism such as you in your times would not for a moment have endured."

"Undoubtedly—in one sense of the word—despotism. But Ariston claims that this despotism, though absolute, applies to only a few hours in the day, whereas in our time there was for the mass as great a despotism that controlled their entire existence. Some time must be given to the securing of food, clothing, and shelter. The pres-

ent government claims to furnish this to all with less labor and less compulsion than under our system."

We discussed this question at some length, but I could not help thinking that some other thought was preoccupying Neaera's mind, and presently she stretched her arms over her head and said, "Oh, I am tired of it all!"—then turning on her side she laid her head upon a bare arm, and looking at me, smiled.

It was impossible to mistake her gesture or her smile; it told me that she had not called me to speak of serious things at all; it beckoned me to her side on the divan, and I almost felt myself unconsciously responding to her invitation. But I was aware of danger and refrained. Nevertheless, I was curious to know whether I was accusing her wrongfully, and I said:

"The thing that puzzles me most about you all is—" I hesitated intentionally, and she helped me.

"What is it?"

"I don't know how to say it."

"Bashful?"

"A little."

"Can I guess?"

"I think you can."

"We are all as much puzzled about it as you."

"And yet I am told you pride yourselves on your good behavior."

"Some do"—she paused a little, took a flower from a vase by her side and bit the stalk; she held the flower in her mouth a minute, looked at me again, half closing her eyes; but I remained seated where I was. Finding I remained unresponsive, she went on:

"We have all the faults that come from too great intimacy between men and women. The men get so accustomed to the women that romance is dead. We tend to become a vast family of brothers and sisters. Fortunately we travel and receive travelers, and so the dreadful monotony is relieved. *You* are a traveler, you see."

I understood now why I was favored, but still I remained seated where I was.

Perceiving that I was either stupid or resolute she jumped up from the divan and came to where I sat. She was short, and as she stood by me, her face was near mine and only a little above it. She had the flower in her hand now, and handing it to me, said:

"Put it in my hair."

I did so.. She lowered her head to help me. I thought the time had come to effect an escape.

"Did you ever hear," said I, "the Eastern story of the man with the staff, the cock, and the pot?"

"No, tell it me."

"There was once upon a time a man climbing a mountain. He had a pot hung on his arm and a cock in his hand. In the other hand he held a staff. On his way he perceived a young girl and invited her to climb the mountain with him. With some little show of reluctance she consented, but as they approached the last house on the mountainside she paused and said:

"'I shall go no farther with you!'

"'Why not?' asked he.

"'Because I fear that when we have gone beyond reach of these houses you will kiss me.'

"'Nay,' answered the man, 'do you not see that both hands are encumbered? In one hand I hold my staff; in the other is a cock and a pot hangs upon my arm.'

"The maiden smiled and they pursued their way. But when they were gone well up on their way the maiden stopped again and said:

"'I shall go no farther with you.'

"'Why not?' asked he.

"'Because I fear that now we are beyond reach of the houses, you will stick your staff in the

ground; you will put your cock under your pot, and you will kiss me.'

"And the man did then at once stick his staff in the ground; he put the cock under the pot and kissed her—as indeed all along she meant he should."

She gradually edged away from me as I proceeded with my story, until at last she sank on the divan again.

When I had finished she said, "That is a very old story, and if you will permit me I shall get to work again."

I bowed very low and left her, feeling more humiliated than Neaera; and I wondered why it was that virtue, in the presence of vice, sometimes seems cheap and even ridiculous.

CHAPTER X

AN UNEXPECTED SOLUTION

CHAIRO had been kept informed of what was happening to Lydia until the last day of the Eleusinian festival, and he believed that all danger of losing her was over. The appearance of Lydia, therefore, in the procession wearing the yellow veil was all the more a stupefying surprise to him. I was standing with him and Ariston as the procession passed, and was looking with eager and delighted interest at the gracefully draped figures that succeeded one another to the sound of music, which, with a subtle combination of majesty and grace, combined the plain chant of the Catholic liturgy with the lighter fugues of Bach, for in and out of great chords there ran intermingling strains of many voices, very light and delicate.

The procession was headed by girls and boys, selected for their perfect wholesomeness, who carried flowers and scattered them; they were dressed in the old Greek *chiton* which, fastened

only above the shoulder, betrayed every movement of their lithe young bodies, as, swaying with the rhythm of the sower casting his seed, they threw their offerings first on one side and then on the other. The governor of the State, the mayor of the city, the commander of the militia, and their respective cabinets and staffs followed, respectively arrayed in the insignia of their office; the other cults also were represented; those of Jupiter robed in purple; those of Asclepius; those of Dionysus, and others. In striking contrast with these came next the novices and the nuns, swathed closely and heavily, even the head being concealed within a fold of drapery. The procession entered from the cloister, and on approaching the altar where was kept burning the vestal flame, it divided so as to allow the high priest and his acolytes to pass up between. The high priest was followed by the choir, and after the choir walked those who had accepted the mission.

It was upon these that the curiosity and impatience of the congregation centered; it sometimes happened that there were none; in such case the procession was closed by the Demetrians—that is to say, all who had already accepted the mission and completed it. On this occasion a single figure was seen to enter the portal, covered

with the yellow veil and so draped as to conceal her features. The head, however, more usually bowed, was erect. For a sensible period of suspense it was impossible to tell who it was that had assumed the yellow shroud; but presently those nearest to her had discovered Lydia, and her name passed in an awful whisper to where we stood. The name once pronounced, there could no longer be mistake; Lydia alone of all the postulants could so hold herself: *Vera incessu patuit dea.* I felt a clutch at my arm, and, turning, saw the face of Chairo blanched and hard; but I was too absorbed in the procession to take long heed of him; I saw the procession close, and followed the ritual with breathless interest till the congregation was dismissed, unaware that Chairo had already slipped away from me and out of the temple.

As Ariston and I walked back to our lodging I asked what Chairo would do. Ariston answered that he feared trouble. We were both deeply affected, for even Ariston, votary of Demeter though he was, could not but feel as I did, that there was something in the choice of Lydia strange and portentous. We discussed it in low voices, and for many days little else was spoken of. Meanwhile, anxiety regarding the action of

Chairo redoubled for he had disappeared. It was well known that the Demetrian council was taking steps, but no one knew what the steps were, and a sense of impending calamity weighed upon us all.

From the moment Lydia had decided to accept the mission, there seemed to grow in her a strength that was not her own. She rose from the couch, on which she had thrown herself upon leaving Iréné, without a symptom of her old irresolution; she stood without sense of fatigue while the yellow shroud was so draped about her as to hide her face to the utmost possible, for though she knew she could not escape recognition an instinct in her set her upon the attempt to do so; and when in the procession she entered the portals of the temple, a glow moved up from her heart to her head that deeply flushed her countenance as she heard the whisper "Lydia" grow from mouth to mouth into an almost angry protestation. Nevertheless, she felt sure now that she was right; it was easier as well as nobler to make the sacrifice than to yield. She walked firmly, with head erect, until she sank upon her knees before the altar, and the choir's triumphant processional was subdued in low responses to the chant of the high priest.

At last he turned to her and lifted his hands

in mute suggestion that she should bring her tribute to the goddess. A Demetrian presented her the flint which was to symbolize the strength of her sacrifice; the priest gave her the steel that symbolized its cruelty; and striking one against the other she lit a spark that added a new flame to the altar. This was the irrevocable act. A great sigh mingled with many sobs broke from those present in the temple; but *her* eyes remained dry, and at the close of the ceremony she walked back to the cloister as firmly as she had left it.

But once returned, there came upon her the inevitable reaction; she discovered that the strength which had come upon her suddenly could no less suddenly forsake her; she threw herself upon a couch and asked to be left alone. As the door closed upon her attendant she was half astonished, half afraid to find sobs invade her and tears gush from her eyes. What did it all mean? Had she a will of her own, or was she merely the arena upon which instincts, half of heredity, half of education, were fighting out their battle, independently of her? She seemed to have become a mere spectator of it; alas, she must also be its victim. She lay sobbing until the sobs slowly died away, leaving her exhausted, and at last she slept like a tired child.

The next morning she awoke as weak as though she had had a long fever. It was the custom for novices to be removed to a temple in an island off the coast as soon as they accepted the mission—for, from the day of acceptance they were secluded—living with Demetrians only, under conditions which, though compatible with their mission were, nevertheless, most conducive to gayety and health. But Lydia was too weak to be moved; and she lay in her bed night and day, eating little, sleeping little, very quiet. There was hardly room in her thoughts for regret; she had committed the irrevocable act and now she must resign herself; her body had been exhausted by the struggle and cried for rest; and rest was given her.

Slowly her strength returned, and she was beginning to feel the time had come to go to the island cloister when, suddenly in the middle of the night, she was aware that some one had pushed aside the curtain at her door and was standing in her room. She had neither seen nor heard anything, but she was conscious of a presence, and a guilty delight in her heart told her, however incredible, that it was—Chairo.

She raised herself in her bed on her hand and found herself seized in a passionate embrace.

"For the love of God!" she heard his voice whisper to her, "don't resist"; and compelling arms lifted her off her couch, wrapped the heavy coverings upon it about her, and carried her like a child out of the room. She was taken into the cloister; her head was covered, and she did not wish to see. The weakness which had racked her bones and from which she had barely recovered came back to her, but now how different! For it wrapped a lethargy about her to which it was an ecstasy to surrender; no pain now; no sorrow; not even contrition. She was in the arms of Chairo, and it had happened without a sign from her; almost against her will; without her consent. For a season, at any rate, Lydia surrendered herself to the sweet self-deception that this had really all happened without her consent. Deep in her heart, however, was the conviction that she had strength enough to resist had she chosen; that a single cry would have sufficed to thwart a desperate stratagem. She was a little alarmed to find that this conviction could remain unshaken, and that, nevertheless, there was a song of thanksgiving in her heart that the strength of resistance had remained unused and the cry remained unuttered.

Chairo's strong arms were about her as he

silently hurried through the cloister. Lydia heard other hurrying steps besides his; he had clearly joined confederates; she was soon put into a carriage and whirled away from the temple.

CHAPTER XI

THE PLOT THICKENS

THE first news I had of the carrying off of Lydia was from Ariston. I was just going down to breakfast when he abruptly entered the sitting room we shared, and exclaimed: "Lydia has disappeared!"

To my inquiries he answered that the gate of the cloister had been forced, and the janitor bound and gagged. Obviously several men were involved, for traces of many steps were clearly visible—all shod; Lydia's sandals and cothurni were still in her room: she had, apparently, been lifted off her bed in the bed clothes; the absence of all trace of bare feet indicated that Lydia had not put foot to ground. Probably she had been gagged also, as no cry had been heard; everything seemed to indicate that she had been carried off against her will. The Demetrian council was swearing in special constables and had called upon the state authorities for help to capture the intruders; on the other hand, Balbus and others

were collecting their followers, and armed conflict was feared.

'Ariston was in great perplexity; all his convictions were on the side of order; but friendship made it impossible for him to join Chairo's enemies. 'After an animated discussion we decided that he should go to the council and endeavor to obtain a hearing, in the hope of persuading the council to abandon the effort either to recover Lydia or punish Chairo. Ariston begged me to go to Lydia First, explain to her the steps he was taking, and put myself at her disposal should she have a message to send him.

I hurried to Lydia First's apartment and found Cleon there. With flushed face Cleon announced that Chairo and his sister had been captured; that they were probably at that moment before the magistrate; that he had rushed home to tell his mother, and that she was preparing to go to her daughter.

Presently Lydia First entered the room; the events of the night had not impaired the dignity of her manner but had deepened the lines in her already timeworn countenance. She bade me seek Ariston, of whose knowledge of legal procedure she felt in need, and hurry him to the court where Lydia and Chairo were being examined.

Prisoners were entitled to counsel if they asked for it; but the innocent seldom availed themselves of the privilege. The examination might, therefore, be actually then proceeding unless either Chairo or Lydia demanded an adjournment. It little suited the temperament of Chairo to seek counsel, and the consciousness of innocence would prevent Lydia from doing so. I hastened, therefore, with all speed and found Ariston waiting to be introduced into the council chamber. He was still ignorant of the capture. We hurried to the courthouse and Ariston, who had no right to appear except at the request of one of the prisoners, sent in a line both to Chairo and Lydia urging them to demand an adjournment. The examination had already commenced. Both Chairo and Lydia, however, asked that Ariston be admitted, and I was admitted with him.

Lydia First was there and had already urged both Chairo and Lydia to ask for counsel, and both had refused. The examination was not a public one, only relations and friends or counsel being admitted; when, however, Ariston's message was received, he was by general consent admitted, and he immediately addressed the examining magistrate. He pointed out that Chairo, being a member of the state legislature, enjoyed

immunity from arrest unless captured *in flagrante delicto,* and that Lydia was not charged with any offense; both ought, therefore, to be released without examination. A priest, however, who appeared for the Demetrian council persisted that their doors had been forced, their sanctuary violated, a vestal carried off without her consent, and Chairo found in the act of flight with her; the priest maintained that this constituted arrest *in flagrante delicto.* Chairo reminded the magistrate that he had not sought to escape examination, but added that, mindful of the magnitude of the issue involved in the case, he felt it ought to be fought out in the political rather than the judicial arena, and that he was indebted to Ariston for having reminded the court of an immunity which would transfer the question from the courts to the legislature.

The magistrate decided that he would not proceed with the examination, but in view of the seriousness of the offense he would hold Chairo until the question whether legislative immunity applied to his case could be decided by a full court.

Chairo was, therefore, confined in the house of detention, and Lydia was restored to her mother.

We at once sought admittance to Chairo, and found him impatiently pacing the room where he was confined.

"There was treachery," he exclaimed. "My carriage had been tampered with; it broke down within a mile of the cloister. I am trying to think who can have been guilty of it."

He continued pacing the room and neither of us was disposed to speak. Suddenly he turned to Ariston:

"But I have not thanked you; I should have made a mistake had you not interfered; and I know you belong to the other side." He put his hand out to Ariston and they shook hands warmly.

"You may be of immense service at this moment," he continued, "just because you belong to the government party. I was prepared for violence, and Balbus is now collecting our friends; but this treachery makes me doubtful of success; only some half dozen knew of my plan; the loyalty of every one of them seems essential to us, and one of them is a—traitor."

"You should be thankful that treachery prevented your resort to violence," answered Ariston. "You have secured what must be the matter of most importance to you: Lydia is restored to her home; she is removed from the cloister and is

given time for reflection. This you could doubtless not have brought about in any other manner than by the plan you adopted. But had you escaped there would have been only one alternative; now the question can be settled without the shedding of blood."

"But I have lost Lydia!" exclaimed Chairo, with haggard eyes.

"Not lost," said Ariston. "I have yet to learn just what part Lydia has played in the matter. Did she consent?"

Chairo, who was still pacing the room, suddenly stopped and faced us; he put out both hands deprecatingly and seemed about to answer, but arrested himself and resumed his walk. Then very slowly he said:

"What do you mean by consent? Can she be said to have consented when, under an influence that paralyzed her will she paid her tribute at the altar? The question we have to bring before the state is not whether Lydia consented to the cult or to me, but whether the influence exercised by the cult is a wholesome influence or a damnable one."

"If you want this issue to be fairly presented," said Ariston, "don't allow your case to be prejudiced by violence. Send orders at once to Balbus

bidding him abandon this gathering together of your followers. The mere fact that he is preparing for violence will distort the issue, and any attempt at rescue will prevent a calm and fair discussion of it altogether."

"You are right," said Chairo. He took out a note book and made as though he would write, but checking himself, he said: "I must put nothing on paper," and turning to me asked: "Won't you go to Balbus at once and explain to him that violence now would be a mistake? He would hardly accept such a message from Ariston, who is known to be on the government side; but from you it will seem less open to suspicion. Tell him if he doubts you to come and see me, and hear my views from my own lips."

On leaving Ariston I was aware that a large force of special constables, bearing the badge of Demeter—a sheaf of wheat—were gathered about the House of Detention. I hurried to the office of *Liberty* and found a crowd there, through which it was difficult to penetrate. Obviously something unusual was happening. I should never have got through to Balbus had I not been able to state that I was the bearer of a message from Chairo. This, however, opened every door to me, and soon I found myself in a room where Balbus

was engaged in giving rapid instructions to a number of men waiting their turn to be received. Neaera was there also, sitting at a side table, busily writing. As soon as I began giving my message to Balbus, Neaera rose and came toward us. She was serious and there was a slight frown upon her face. When I had finished, Balbus turned to her and she answered:

"It is too late. Measures have already been taken. Besides, Chairo's messenger"—and as she looked at me squarely in the face her brow darkened—"is not accredited."

I explained the situation as Chairo had stated it and urged Balbus to go himself to the House of Detention. But Neaera said quickly:

"If Balbus were to leave this office unescorted he would be arrested. He is already compromised. Moreover, we cannot take our orders from a prisoner."

"The House of Detention is strongly guarded," said I.

"And we are strongly armed," answered Neaera.

I felt that it was useless further to insist and proposed to retire, but Neaera whispered a word in Balbus's ear, and he said to me, "I think I shall ask you to stay with us a little while."

"I shall not stay with you except compelled to do so by actual violence," I answered, with no slight indignation.

"Then we shall have to use violence," answered Balbus.

In a moment I was seized, bound, gagged, and hurried into an adjoining room where I was tied to a chair and a band was fastened about my eyes. In this uncomfortable position I remained for some hours.

CHAPTER XII

NEAERA'S IDEA OF DIPLOMACY

AT first I was aware from a hum of voices that others remained in the room with me; but after some time the hum ceased; next I heard the noise of artillery not far off. It did not last long, but I recognized the tearing screech of machine guns. When it was over, believing myself to be alone, I sought to extricate myself from my bonds. The cords, however, were so tightly fastened about my wrists that the skin was torn, and every effort I made to loosen them occasioned acute pain. I must have uttered a low cry, for I heard a voice I knew well say mockingly:

"Does it hurt?" And the gag was removed from my mouth.

"I thought I was alone," answered I.

"We *are* alone—quite alone," said Neaera. "Why don't you stick your staff in the ground and put the cock under the pot?"

She was so close to me that I could feel her breath on my cheek.

"Release my hands and I will," answered I.

"Thank you, indeed! Do you think I have had you bound for that!"

"I do not flatter myself; but as you are disposed to chat, tell me what is happening."

She took the band off my eyes and looked bewitching as she mocked me:

"Nothing is happening; and if there were something happening how should I know it?"

"Who tampered with Chairo's carriage?"

I asked the question suddenly in the hope that I should take her by surprise.

"What carriage?" asked she with an air of innocence, but the color mounting to her cheek betrayed her.

"Chairo says some one treacherously tampered with his carriage."

"Nonsense," answered Neaera. "The accident to Chairo's carriage is not the first carriage accident in the world. Chairo is thinking only of himself."

"How so?"

"He wants Lydia; we want liberty."

My suspicions were confirmed.

"I suppose Chairo has made love to you—as have all the rest."

The dimple deepened in Neaera's cheek, but

she busied herself unfastening the cords that bound my wrist.

"I am going to give you liberty at any rate," she said. "For I want you to do something for me."

"Stick my staff in the ground and put——"

"No; I have forgiven you; it is something very different from that."

My hands were free now, and I stretched them out in exquisite relief.

"Are you a little grateful?"

"Of course, I am grateful—but I am still more curious to know what you want me to do for you."

"It is very simple." She showed me a sheet of paper upon which was some typewriting. "I want you to sign this."

I put out my hand to take the paper and read the writing.

"Oh, no!" she cried, putting the paper behind her back. "I want you to sign without reading." She looked at me with a smile which she meant to be irresistible; and, assuredly, to most men the temptation would have been great—for the smile said plainly that acquiescence would have its full reward.

I had unloosed the cords about my feet and was standing in front of her irresolute; not wish-

ing to make an enemy of her by a downright refusal, for I did not know what confederates might be within call and yet half inclined to snatch at the paper and read it in spite of her. But I suspected that she meant me to do this; that she shrewdly guessed a playful struggle between us would increase the temptation to yield to her beyond powers of resistance.

As I stood smiling at her, for the grace of her posture—leaning a little forward and holding the paper behind her back—disarmed me, she suddenly waved the paper before me as though inviting me to snatch at it.

I cannot imagine what would have been the result of this little comedy had not a distant hum from the street suddenly attracted our attention. She ran to the window, threw up the sash and, taking up a field glass that was lying on the table, looked down the street. One glance was sufficient; when she turned back into the room her face was blanched; every trace of coquetry had disappeared; she barely looked at me and hurried from the room. She locked the door upon me as she left. I went to the window, but on my way there picked up the paper she had offered for my signature and which she had dropped as she picked up the field glass. I was too much inter-

ested in what was happening in the street to read it then. I thrust it in my wallet and saw without the help of the field glass that the street was full of armed men hurrying to the *Liberty* building, and upon their shoulders the badge of Demeter—a golden sheaf on a blue ground—was clearly visible. Obviously, Balbus's attempt at rescue had failed, and instead of bringing back Chairo in triumph to the *Liberty* office, it was the special constables who were crowding to its doors. Soon I heard a rush of steps up the stairs; there was a fumbling at the door; the door was forced and there rushed in a number of men, one of whom recognized me. I explained the message from Chairo which I had brought to the office of *Liberty* and, without mentioning names, added that I had been bound and imprisoned there. The cords in the room and the abrasions on my wrists confirmed my story. I promised to hold myself at the disposal of the investigating magistrate and was given my liberty.

The offices in which I had been confined were searched and every paper in them carefully collected. I betook myself at once to the chambers I shared with Ariston, but on the way I took the paper I had been asked to sign out of my pocket and read it.

Neaera's Idea of Diplomacy

"DEAR CHAIRO:

"Balbus has confined, bound, and gagged me. I owe my freedom now to Neaera, who will see that this reaches you. VERB. SAP."

Not a word in this interesting document was literally false; and yet it was obvious how falsely Neaera meant to use it.

CHAPTER XIII

NEAERA MAKES NEW ARRANGEMENTS

NEAERA left the building in which were the *Liberty* offices by an entrance on a street other than that which she had seen threatened by the constables, and hurriedly considered where she could find a certain Masters to whom she had always determined to fly in case of defeat. Masters was a man whose career had greatly contributed to the particular phase of Collectivism which I found prevailing in the New England States. Originally the state had undertaken to monopolize manufacture, and for a long period—over a hundred years—had succeeded in giving general satisfaction. During the first century of Collectivist existence so much time was spent in transforming cities that there was no leisure for individual enterprise; indeed, during this period the majority worked as hard as they had ever worked under the competitive régime; for although a half-day's labor only was exacted to earn a full share in the national income, an-

other half-day's labor was asked and freely given to make those changes in the cities and towns which were obviously necessary under the new régime. And a certain exchange of occupation had taken place, masons and carpenters working all day at their respective trades, while others worked all day at theirs, extra wages being paid for extra work; these extra wages were applicable to the purchase of luxuries, the most laborious and the most thrifty thus reaping the reward of their labor and thrift. When, however, the cities, towns, and villages had been so converted as to furnish practically equivalent lodging to all, under conditions that were wholesome and with due regard to the demand for the beautiful that, though expressed in my time only by a few, is in fact latent in us all, there was no longer the same imperious call for extra labor on the part of the state, and the leisure enjoyed in consequence was soon employed in a manner not anticipated by socialists of my day. And Masters had been the first to inaugurate the new system. It happened in this way:

The state had exposed itself to much criticism as to many of the things furnished by its factories, and when Masters was still a youth of twenty-five years, the complaint on this subject became so

wide-spread that he set himself to correcting the evil. He was employed in a wall-paper factory, and wall paper was just one of the articles that had given rise to the greatest dissatisfaction; so one day when an artistic friend was mocking at the work the state factory turned out, Masters suggested that they should get a few others to join them in setting up a factory of their own. The experiment was looked upon at first as a piece of innocent child's play, but when some hundred young men and women actually succeeded in producing a wall paper so preferable to that manufactured by the state that theirs alone was purchased and the state had to shut down some of the government mills, the question of the right of individuals to compete with the state was brought up in the legislature, and the issue became sufficiently serious to drive Masters into politics for the purpose of defending what came to be known as "Liberty of Industry."

The principal argument made against this so-called liberty of industry was that Masters and his fellow-workers were becoming rich. The money that formerly was paid to the state factory was now paid to them, and thus the accumulation of wealth became possible which it was the principal object of Collectivism to prevent. In vain

Masters argued that they applied their leisure to the manufacture of wall paper not in order to become rich, but in order to have paper that suited their taste; that the real value of Collectivism was to provide all men with the necessaries of life so as not to subject poor men to a few rich; that so long as the state provided necessaries against a stipulated amount of labor it was quite immaterial whether a few chose by voluntary labor to provide an article that was needed and incidentally increase their own wealth; and that such voluntary labor benefited all. The cry against accumulation was too powerful to be silenced, and Masters felt some concession must be made to it; so he consented to a proposition that all state money should have purchasing power only during a period of two years; under this system hoarding or accumulation would be prevented, because every two years the money so hoarded would become valueless—all money being paper and bearing a date, gold being used only by the state in foreign trade.

This compromise was adopted, and the effect of it was to give an immense impulse to private industry. While the question was being discussed few were willing to embark on an enterprise that might be declared illegal and be appropriated by

the state. As soon, however, as private enterprise was indirectly sanctioned by the passage of this law it became clear that any individual might devote his leisure to the production of anything not satisfactorily produced by the state, and the result of this new departure was considerable, for it not only greatly increased the total wealth of the community but it stimulated the state to maintain and improve standards of manufacture, contributing all that is good in competition without tolerating those features of oppression and pauperism which had made competition so evil in our day.

And Masters became a great man in the community; for not only was he regarded as the author of private enterprise, but possessing the powers of organization and the judgment in selecting his fellow-workers essential to success, he soon became the head of numerous enterprises; and although he was unable at first to accumulate wealth in the shape of money, he did accumulate it in the shape of products of manufacture. Moreover, the fact that he could not accumulate it in the shape of money and that there was a limit to his power to accumulate it in the shape of products of manufacture, drove him to distribute his earnings among his neighbors with a

prodigality so lavish that, possessing a naturally generous heart and an attractive manner, he became a man of enormous—some men said undue—influence in the state. Recently, too, owing to the establishment of a banking system, accumulation in private money became possible.

Masters had never married. His interests were so various and engrossing that he had not felt the need of a wife. Nor was he ever at a loss for a companion; the bath was his club; and a short evening—for he was an early riser—was comfortably spent in the society of those with whom he dined at the common table. But he was by no means insensible to feminine charm, and Neaera had not ineffectually aired her graces for his benefit.

Neaera had often decided that Masters was the best match in the country and had schemed to secure him; but she was aware of his sagacity and had so far refrained from any overture that might alienate him. She had, however, never failed to improve an opportunity for displaying her attractions in his presence, taking care to keep religiously away from him at such times lest he should guess the plot that lay at the bottom of all her performances. On more serious occasions she had had long and confidential conversations with

him, chiefly on political subjects; she had indeed been one of his political lieutenants, but when engaged in politics she had studiously avoided the slightest symptoms of coquetry. Masters, on the contrary, had often allowed her to feel that he would gladly have made their relations more intimate. She had seen the big fish rise—a little lazily, it is true—at her cast; she had felt that upon a sufficiently dramatic occasion she could land him; and now it satisfied her sense of antithesis that so signal a defeat as that of her party that day might be converted by her skill into an individual victory.

It was about four in the afternoon—the hour when Masters should be leaving his office for his apartment. If she walked in the direction of the latter he would possibly overtake her; she did not wish to go to him; she preferred to meet him accidentally; it would not do for him to imagine she had counted on him. She walked, therefore, slowly and with a pretty air of concern along the street he usually took, wondering whether she would be favored by fortune before the arrest which she knew was being prepared for her. She felt that the events of the day would be likely to change the daily routine, even of so methodical a man as Masters, and was beginning to fear she

would have to take refuge in his apartment, when she heard a step overtaking her, and to her great relief his big voice said:

"Why, Neaera, what are you doing here? I thought you were in the thick of it?"

Neaera looked up shyly and then down again.

"I am afraid all is over," she said very low.

"And where are you going?"

"I don't know."

"Is there any fear of arrest?"

Neaera brewed up a tear and cast an appealing glance at him. She was one of those fortunate and dangerous women who could summon a tear to her eye without at the same time bringing blood to her nose and eyelids.

"You must step into my apartment until we can take precautions," he said.

"I'm afraid I'll compromise you."

"Compromise *me*!" exclaimed Master, "never in the world! And as for *you*, I'll send for your mother."

"Will you, indeed?" said Neaera, edging a little closer to him; but she did not mean that he should do this.

They were at his door then; and touching her lightly on the elbow he guided her past the porter's lodge, up the staircase and into his rooms.

Masters bade her sit down and tell him how matters stood. Neaera took care that her version of the story should, by keeping herself in the shade, throw the whole responsibility on Chairo and Balbus. Masters, however, plied her with questions which she parried with skill. At last Masters exclaimed:

"But you are blameless in the matter; they cannot mean to arrest you; and if they do, you will be immediately released."

"I am afraid," answered Neaera, "you are inclined to believe others as frank and generous as yourself."

"I don't understand," said Masters, a little uncomfortable under the flattery implied in Neaera's words—for he liked neither flattery nor those who used it.

"I have not lived very long," said she, "but I have lived long enough to know that failure brings discord between the best of friends. I have believed that we could effect our reforms best through constitutional measures; and the very fact that I have been right will unite them all against me now. Of course I have done a great deal of the writing—generally at the dictation of others"; Neaera, as she said this, congratulated herself on having utilized the absence of all from

the offices except herself in destroying every shred of paper that could compromise her, and even fabricating some that would exonerate her. She paused a little, and then went on: "I don't even know who has survived the disaster; some of them I could trust to the end; but others are capable of any treachery. And then mamma"—Neaera's chin twitched a little—"mamma does not know how far I am involved in the matter—and she is so alone——"

And here Neaera's grief became uncontrollable; she jumped up from her chair and burst into a flood of tears. As she stood there, her face in her hands and her soft and rounded figure convulsed by sobs, compassion filled the heart of Masters; all his nascent fondness for her suddenly burst into a flame; he went to her, took her by the shoulders, and said:

"Don't cry, Neaera; I am very fond of you; it hurts me to see you cry; tell me about it; let me help you; I can help you and I will—if you will let me."

As he ejaculated these sentences he gently pressed her shoulders to give emphasis to them; and Neaera yielded to his pressure, so that at the end she was very close to him and her bowed head rested against his breast.

When Masters felt the pressure of her head against him, a rush of love for her passed beyond his control. Looking down at her he observed the delicate whorl of a small ear like a pink shell and a soft neck so inviting that, bending his own head, he pressed his lips against it.

Neaera burst away from him and threw herself upon a chair.

"Masters, Masters," she said reproachfully, "you should not have done that!"

He had often heard stories of Neaera to her disadvantage and at that culminating moment her reproach became a conviction in him that those stories were false. She was looking at him now with tearful eyes wide open; Masters felt contrite; he had taken advantage of her at a time when she was at his mercy; of a woman, too, whose talents and conspicuousness had made of her a mark for envy and malice; she was down now; anyone could hurl a stone at her; she had thrown herself upon his generosity, and he had responded by insulting her. There was only one reparation he could make, and that reparation his heart was already urging him to make.

He threw himself on one knee by the side of Neaera as she sat, put both his arms on her lap, and looking straight into her reproachful eyes, said:

"Only one thing could have justified it; I love you, Neaera; have indeed loved you long——"

Neaera bowed her head and said nothing.

There was a long pause. But Neaera allowed him to remain there, very close to her, with his arms upon her lap. Then Masters moved his head slowly nearer to her until it rested on her bosom. And Neaera folded her soft round arms about his neck.

CHAPTER XIV

"I CONSENTED"

WHEN I reached our chambers I found them empty. At the bath, however, though Ariston was not there I learned the incidents of the day. Almost immediately after my interview with Balbus he had headed the attempt to rescue Chairo; it had been carefully planned, for exactly at three o'clock there converged upon the House of Detention from every side no less than six different lines of attack, which took shape only within a few yards of the house itself, so as to avoid conflicts at points other than the one upon which the attack was concentrated. But the cult had taken precautions. Some machine guns had been put into position and Balbus and his followers were blown out of existence, leaving a mass of wounded men and but few unwounded survivors. The constables that day sworn in had at once repaired to the *Liberty* offices where I had met them. Ariston was doubtless at that moment conferring with Chairo and

the authorities as to how far this act of violence was to affect the procedure.

Ariston did not appear at our chambers until after midnight, and he was then so weary that I did not press him for details. He informed me, however, that my message to Balbus would probably constitute the pivotal fact in his defense of Chairo; that Balbus was shot to pieces; and that the question whether Chairo was to be kept in confinement would probably be heard within a week.

The next morning Ariston had a long conference with me over the whole situation, which was a complicated one. The courts, though fair, were undoubtedly strongly Demetrian in their tendencies, and Ariston did not believe they would set Chairo at liberty; but he felt it his duty as Chairo's counsel to make the effort. Ariston did not conceal from me, however, his conviction that Chairo was insisting on the effort being made in order to use the decision of the courts on the political arena, where the issue must be ultimately decided. He, Ariston, doubted the wisdom of his appearing as Chairo's counsel under the circumstances, for on the political issue Ariston would fight Chairo to a finish, and Chairo knew this. But Chairo had declined to release Ariston. He claimed that Ariston having offered to act for

him, and he having accepted the offer, Ariston was no longer free to withdraw except for better reason than he could give.

The importance of the testimony I could give, and the fact that I was a lawyer admitted me into all the conferences that were held. Chairo's case was to come up on habeas corpus, and I undertook to prepare an affidavit as to the message sent through me by Chairo to Balbus. In the preparation of this affidavit I was confronted with the question whether it was necessary to introduce Neaera's name; there was in me a strong repugnance to doing so. If by involving Neaera I could save an innocent man I should have been guilty in omitting her intervention in my interview with Balbus; but the only person that to my mind could be affected by her intervention was Balbus, and Balbus was dead. Nor would his memory gain much by testimony that would tend to prove that the incriminating act was done at the bidding of a woman.

Three days after Chairo's arrest I was still hesitating over this question when I received a message from Masters asking for an interview. I readily accorded one, and we met in Chairo's chambers which were put at my disposal during his detention.

Masters opened the conversation by telling me confidentially that Neaera had promised to marry him, and that he was naturally, therefore, anxious to exonerate her from responsibility as regarded the rash attempt at rescue. I let him speak preferring to hold my tongue till I learned the story Neaera had told him. He admitted that Neaera had taken a strong stand in favor of Chairo and all that Chairo stood for, but explained the enormous difference between constitutional opposition and appeal to force. Neaera had told him that no word of writing that she could remember—save such as might have been written at the dictation of others—could possibly compromise her, but that she did not know how far some of the survivors might not seek to escape punishment by throwing responsibility on her. Neaera had particularly asked Masters to see me and find out how far this was to be feared.

I recognized the fine work of our astute friend in the story told by Masters, and anxious to know just how far Masters was committed to Neaera, I asked:

"When do you expect to be married?"

Masters lowered his voice as he answered:

"Confidentially, we are already married. I found her wandering aimlessly about the street

expecting arrest; so I took her at once to Washington and married her there. I have left her among friends in a neighboring state till this matter blows over."

The marriage having taken place, there was clearly no duty upon me to enlighten Masters, so I said to him:

"Assure Neaera from me that I shall keep you informed of how matters move and particularly if any witness testifies in a manner to compromise her. No such testimony has been given as yet to my knowledge—but then, none of the survivors of the rescue party have yet been examined."

I worded my answer in a manner to reassure Neaera so far as I myself was concerned and Masters left me satisfied. *He* deserved sympathy, at any rate.

Ariston was extremely busy endeavoring to obtain affidavits from the survivors as to Chairo's non-complicity in the attack, and asked me therefore to see Lydia and explain to her the importance of silence at this juncture. Accordingly I went to see her and found Aunt Tiny in a state of great excitement. Lydia was ill and her mother was with her. Aunt Tiny wanted to take the whole matter on her shoulders.

"Lydia will do just what I tell her to do," assured Aunt Tiny, nodding her curls gravely at me.

"I think I ought to see Lydia myself if it can be managed," I answered.

"But she is so ill." Her lisp was childish and I unconsciously smiled a little. My smile put the little woman in quite a flutter.

"I'll manage it," she said confidently. "You'll see; I'll manage it"; and the busy little body, in spite of her age, tripped out of the room.

Presently she returned radiant. "It's all right," she said. "You can come; I told you I should manage it"; and she showed me to Lydia's room.

Lydia was lying on a couch with a shawl thrown over her knees; but the chiton loosely fastened over her right shoulder showed all the beauty of her bare arm. Very different, indeed, did she look from the girl I awoke to find bending over me on the hill on Tyringham. The warm color of the sun had left her skin, which was now white and extremely delicate. Her head, then strong and erect, now leaned upon a pillow so gently that it seemed

"A petal of blown roses on the grass."

Her mother was standing as I entered and pushed a chair for me by Lydia's side. I sat upon it, and taking Lydia's hand, kissed it. A tear came in her eye at this act of sympathy and she said:

"I am glad you have come to see me."

"I would not have dared to come," said I, "were it not that I have to warn you in Chairo's interest and in your own to say nothing for the present."

"Say nothing!" she exclaimed, raising her head erect. "What! does Chairo wish me to say nothing when I can by a word exonerate him altogether!"

"How so?" I asked.

"I consented," she said. "If the charge is that he carried me away it must fall when I say that I consented."

"Lydia!" exclaimed her mother. "Do be careful! Our friend here can be depended on; but such an admission might be used against you; it may be no crime in law to have consented, but in the cult you will be disgraced forever."

"Then may I be disgraced," said Lydia despondingly. "I did consent; and Chairo must not suffer the odium of having carried me off against my will. Besides," added she, erect again, "I am not ashamed of having consented. I

love Chairo. I am ready to declare it before the world. I was wrong when I accepted the mission and those around me should have known it. Not you, mother," added Lydia, as she saw her mother start, "not you, but the priests — they should have known it—they did know it—and yet they allowed me to accept the mission, loving Chairo."

Lydia put out her arms to her mother, who bent over and kissed her.

"The time will doubtless come," said I, "when you will be able to vindicate Chairo. But at this moment I think, perhaps, it may be wiser to say nothing. Chairo does not wish to be released. He wants the court to decide against him. Such a decision will constitute a grievance which will to his mind strengthen his cause with the people. I don't know," I added, smiling, "whether I am altogether on his side upon all the political issues he stands for; but I am on your side, Lydia. I want you to be happy, and much depends upon the circumstances under which your declaration is made. At this moment it may be wiser to keep silence; they cannot compel you to testify until Chairo is tried, and he proposes to postpone the trial, if he can, until the legislature meets. Masters is taking a vigorous stand in favor of Chairo, and he may carry a suffi-

cient number of votes to constitute a radical majority. Up to the present time Masters has voted upon most issues with the government."

Lydia listened to me with her long blue-gray eyes fixed on mine. It was a luxury to look into them. I thought I was no longer in love with her, but there was a fascination in those eyes to which it was a delight innocently to surrender.

"Chairo is doubtless right," she said, "and you too."

"The priests will probably ask you for a declaration; you are ill enough to make illness an excuse for keeping out of the case altogether. My advice is not to antagonize them at this moment. You can let them know that you propose to make no affidavit whatever, neither on one side nor on the other—at present."

CHAPTER XV

THE HIGH PRIEST OF DEMETER

THE affidavits read before the court by both sides brought out the facts of the case in a manner to leave no doubt in a reasonable mind as to Chairo's guilt. It was true that the person who actually forced the gate of the cloister and overpowered the janitor remained unknown, but Chairo had been arrested in the act of flight and in the company of Lydia, whose capture was the only possible motive for the act. Then, too, on the evening that preceded the capture a typewritten message had been received by the high priest of the cult informing him that Chairo's carriage would that night break down upon a certain road, and that the cult would have an interest in watching the event. Clearly, therefore, the capture had been planned by Chairo. Then, too, for every affidavit read by Ariston to prove that the attack on the House of Detention had been arranged as well as executed by Balbus a dozen affidavits were read by the other side

showing the preparations for violence that had been made by Chairo prior to the carrying off of Lydia. The only question that the court had to decide was, whether Chairo's immunity from imprisonment as a member of the legislature applied to his case; obviously he was an accessory to the crime after as well as before the fact, even though he were not guilty of the crime itself; and he was caught in the very act of carrying out the object for which the crime was committed—that is to say, the placing of Lydia beyond the reach of the cult. But Ariston argued that there was no obligation upon the court to hold Chairo; the matter under the peculiar conditions which presented themselves was practically left to their discretion; and he appealed to them to liberate Chairo lest he should use his imprisonment as an argument before the higher tribunal of public opinion, to which the question must ultimately be referred. The court adjourned without rendering a decision; and it was later arranged that Lydia be removed from New York and Chairo released on parole not to leave the city limits until the trial of his case.

Lydia, therefore, was taken to the Pater's farm at Tyringham; and I gladly accepted an invitation to join the party there, which included Aris-

ton, Anna of Ann, the high priest of the cult, and a few others.

I was much interested to learn there the particular form of Collectivism which prevailed in the country districts of New England. The land, it is true, technically belonged to the state, but the enjoyment of it had never been taken from those farmers who were able and willing to pay to the state the amount of produce exacted by it. Assessors periodically visited every district to determine what crops the land was best fitted to produce, and what amount of the designated crop the occupying farmer should pay the state. The farmer was not bound to grow the particular crop designated, unless a shortage in a preceding year obliged the state to require a quota of the designated crop. He was free to furnish the state some other crop according to a fixed scale, the bushel of wheat constituting the standard—a bushel of wheat being equivalent to so much hay, so many pounds of potatoes, etc. But the farmer generally grew enough of the particular crop designated to furnish the amount required. The state suggested the best rotation of crops and the farmer was left a certain choice.

The working of the system was to eliminate

all the incapable farmers, leaving upon the land only the most capable. The eliminated were put to other employments. The surviving fit generally enjoyed an enviable existence; for the exactions of the state were not exorbitant, and it had become a rule that no farmer should ever be deprived of a farm so long as he paid the state contribution; thus, the state contribution was practically nothing more nor less than a state tax.

The Pater had succeeded to his farm from his father, who himself had succeeded to his, so that the same land had remained in the same family since our day. There was no limitation of hours of work on the farm. The occupation was regarded as so desirable that farm laborers willingly gave their whole time; for during the summer their life was enlivened by the arrival of city dwellers, who occupied the colony buildings adjacent in the neighborhood; and in the depth of the winter, when the sporting season was over, every farm laborer had his two or three months in town. The owner of the farm, for so every farmer was still called, supported his own laborers and supplied them with money for their annual city vacation. His own wants, including the wages paid to the laborer, were supplied by the sale to the state of the farm produce over and

above that required by the state for rent. The essential Collectivist feature of the system consisted in the fact that no man was obliged by the necessity of earning wages to work upon a farm. He could always refuse to work for a farmer by taking work from the state. Only those farmers who knew how to make their farms not only prosperous but attractive, could secure laborers, the relation between a farmer and his hands being that of man to man rather than that of employer to employee. Indeed, it was the security every man and woman had of employment by the state that had caused pauperism and prostitution to disappear; and with them the dependence of one class upon another. In agriculture, as in manufacture, employment of one individual by another was a matter of inclination, not of compulsion; and under these circumstances every employer took care to make his employment agreeable and to share equitably with his fellow-workers the product of their joint labors.

As soon as the hearing of habeas corpus proceedings were concluded and Lydia was transported to Tyringham she rapidly gained health. Chairo wrote to her daily the progress of his preparations for the legislature, which was to meet in a few days. He was assured of Masters's

support in favor of a bill of amnesty to all engaged in the carrying off of Lydia and the attack on the House of Detention, and this bill would constitute the first business to be brought before the Assembly. An identical bill would be introduced in the Senate, and efforts were being made at once to secure the approval of the governor.

Meanwhile we often had leisure at Tyringham for the discussion of the Demetrian cult, which had given rise to so great a tumult. The day that the high priest received intelligence of the proposed amnesty bill I asked him his views regarding it.

The high priest was a tall, aged man, closely shaven—as indeed were all the priests—and very slow and distinct in his way of speaking. Though he occupied the highest function in the cult he was by no means its controlling will. On the contrary, the Demetrian council was composed almost entirely of women, that is to say, priestesses; but it had passed into a tradition that in order to avoid too great animosity on the part of the men, these last should be permitted a representation on the council and the presiding officer and the head of the cult should be a man.

The high priest answered my question with his usual deliberation and care:

"I cannot tell you what my own views regarding this matter are; the subject will be discussed by the council and its argument presented in due time by its representative in the legislature, but I can tell you some of the things that occur to me in favor of this measure and against it:

"In the first place, it is clear that whatever may be the merits of the Demetrian cult it is bound sometimes to occasion misfortune; misfortune is seldom distinguished from injustice, and so the cult is made to bear the brunt of every disappointment that results from the working of the system, whether it proceeds from unwisdom, caprice, or accident. Now against caprice and accident the cult is powerless; but as regards unwisdom, whether it be in the council or in those to whom the council tenders the mission, the cult is responsible, and must be held responsible. Whether the misfortune in this case results from unwisdom or not is a question which I do not care to discuss; but obviously something has occurred that can be used to discredit our cult, and it is the part of wisdom to diminish the evil resulting therefrom to the utmost possible.

"In the second place, there has been recourse to violence, and violence is the greatest crime against social welfare which any man can commit.

Are the persons guilty of this crime to be left uncorrected and free to frame new plots of violence against the state?

"In the third place, a trial of all the persons involved in this matter is going to give rise to a great public scandal. The trial is essentially of a political character, and no political trial can be conducted impartially; the very fact that political prejudice enters into it necessarily impairs the impartiality of the court; and even if a fair court could be secured, the defeated political faction would surely accuse the court of unfairness.

"All these things make the decision of this question complicated and difficult."

"But," asked I, "does not the very fact that your cult raises these difficulties put into question the wisdom of the cult itself?"

"Do you mean to say that in your opinion the mission of Demeter, with the beauty of its sacrifice and the blessing it must eventually bring upon the race, should be abandoned because in a single instance it has crossed the passion of a Chairo?"

"In the first place," asked I, "is it sure to bring a sensible benefit to the race? And in the second, is the sacrifice a beautiful one? Is it not rather inhuman and repulsive?"

"I shall answer your questions in the order

you put them: Plato was the first philosopher on record who proposed applying to the breeding of men the same art as we apply to the breeding of animals—and he did not seriously propose it; his proposition was spurned, as you know, by all so-called practical statesmen up to the day of Latona, not because the evil attending the existing system was not recognized, but because the remedy proposed seemed worse than the evil. And, indeed, if men and women were to be obliged to mate or refrain from mating at the bidding of the state, one may well ask whether life would not become intolerable to the point of universal suicide. The evil, therefore, remained unabated. Consumption, scrofula, cancer, and other unnamable diseases became rooted in the race on the one hand, and no attempt was made to compensate the evil by selecting according to art. Not only so, but the pauper proved the most prolific, the cultured the least prolific; so that the breeding of man—far more important to human happiness than the breeding of sheep—seemed contrived so as to occasion the minimum of good and the maximum of evil. There seemed to be only two ways to mitigate this curse: one, to restore marriage to the sanctity it theoretically had under the canons of the church; the other, to ap-

peal to the self-sacrifice of a few gifted women. As to the first, Latona believed marriage to be degraded in great part through the inability of young men and women to choose their mates with wisdom, and she instituted therefore the system of provisional marriage, tolerable only in youth, and though possible in later years, tolerated then only under extraordinary circumstances. As to the second, Latona instituted the mission of Demeter.

"It is not easy yet to draw any definite conclusion from the practical working of the system, for it has not been working long enough. Nevertheless, it would be impossible, I think, to find anywhere a more hopeful band of youths than those to whose education Iréné and her staff are now devoting themselves. Indeed, wherever the cult is in operation the girls and boys who proceed from the cloister are, to my judgment, immeasurably superior in the average to any similar number drawn at haphazard from the community at large. And, indeed, how could it be otherwise? Heredity must in the long run count for a great deal; and by securing to the Demetrian issue, not only the highest conceivable education and parental care, but a sense that they owe something more to themselves as regards standard of conduct because

they owe so much to the state, we create an environment which gives hereditary tendencies the best possible opportunities for development.

"Now, as regards the last part of your question, my answer is a very simple one: The mission is beautiful only when wisely tendered and wisely accepted; when unwisely tendered or unwisely accepted it is likely to be, as you say, inhuman and even repulsive."

"But how are you going to learn wisdom," asked I, "in a matter so difficult?"

"Experience has already helped us, I think, to avoid serious mistakes except in such exceptional cases as this of Lydia. For your attention has perhaps not been called to a profound difference that exists in women little recognized in your day. This difference can, I think, best be defined as follows: some women are essentially wives, others are essentially mothers. Love is the key that opens the heart of the one, maternity the instinct that animates the other. You are a lawyer, are you not? Did you ever have any divorce cases?'

"Many!"

"Ransack your brain, then, and see if you do not find there evidence of what I have stated."

He paused; and there came back to me an in-

terview with a woman who complained that her husband did not wish her to have children; and as it was children she wanted—so she said—the husband was almost immaterial. There came to my mind also many women I had known for whom the husband ceased to have importance the moment a child was born.

"Our art," continued he, "consists in selecting the women who combine willingness to sacrifice themselves with this maternal instinct; and not the maternal instinct alone—most women have this—but a maternal instinct that preponderates every other. We have made a double mistake in Lydia: her love for Chairo is the preponderating instinct; and though she has undoubtedly a strongly developed religion of sacrifice, she is also fond of pleasure. That pretty little tip-tilted nose of hers," he added, smiling, "should have warned us of this!"

CHAPTER XVI

ANNA'S SECRET

I SAW very little of Anna during the first few days of my stay at the Pater's. Cleon had drawn a bad number and was therefore drafted on a detachment of workmen engaged in mending roads—a work all disliked, and as no one volunteered for it, it had to be apportioned by lot. Anna of Ann felt the absence of Cleon because, although he was young, he had attached himself to her and she had learned somewhat to depend on his companionship. In the absence of Cleon, therefore, I often joined Anna in her walks and became more and more charmed by her singleness of purpose. She seemed indifferent to everything except her art, cared nothing for Chairo and his principles, had little conviction as regards the Demetrian cult, and absorbed herself altogether in the joy to be derived from beauty, whether in nature or in man. The idea that there was something in man different from nature had become so familiar to this century that

the confusion between them from which the philosophy of our time was only just emerging seemed to her altogether impossible, and it was a hope of hers one day to compose a group or monument in which man with his faculty of subjugating the forces of nature to his use would be contrasted with these forces, typified either by animals or undeveloped human races. She had shown me several models upon which she was at work to typify these forces; among them I remember one of a negro kneeling, with wonder on his thick lips and a superb strength about his loins; she had modelled also a lion crouching at the bidding of an unseen hand; but I had seen no model of Conquering Man. In an abandoned sugar house which she had arranged as a studio, however, were many unfinished busts hidden away which she did not show to me or to others, and there was a good deal of curiosity and some little chaff as to the secret so carefully thus concealed by her.

One morning, however, that I had risen early, tempted by the bright sun of an Indian summer, I started for a short stroll, and passing Anna's studio was surprised to find a window open. Looking inside the window, I saw Anna so absorbed on a clay bust that she had not heard my approach. I watched her work in silence without

appreciating that I had surprised a secret, until moving a little I saw clearly that the bust on which she was working was a portrait of Ariston. Even then I was not clear that Anna had been hiding this portrait from us; it seemed perfectly natural that she should be engaged upon it. But when she at last perceived me she blushed scarlet and threw a cloth over it.

"You have seen it," she said reproachfully.

"Why not?" asked I. "It was only a portrait of Ariston."

"Was it so like him that you saw it at once?"

"Did you not mean it to be so?"

"No!" she exclaimed, almost with temper, "and I did not mean you to see it."

I apologized to her and suggested that she should join me in my walk; but she did not answer me at once; she moved about the studio as though agitated by my discovery, moving things aimlessly, taking things up and putting them down again. I stood at the window waiting for an answer, for I did not wish to leave her in this disturbed condition. At last she looked me full in the face and her mobile lips twitched with ill-suppressed emotion. Had she known how little I suspected the cause of her trouble she need not have been so moved; but she had been so long

fighting against her love for Ariston that she imagined the discovery by me of the portrait had betrayed her secret.

"You won't tell any one you have seen it, will you?" she said at last appealingly.

"Certainly not," answered I. "But why are you so anxious to keep it a secret?"

She opened her eyes at this question and then burst out, with a sob in her voice:

"I would not have them guess it for the world."

At last I understood: this bust was not a portrait of Ariston; it was a study for her Conquering Man, and she could not keep out of it the features of the one she loved.

"See," she said, pointing to the corner where the uncompleted busts were hidden, "they all look like him; even when I tried to model a face without a beard, expressly to escape this haunting thought, you can see it—somewhere in the brow," and she moved her hand over the brow. "At every attempt I make, something betrays me," and she sat down on a low chair and buried her face in her hands.

I stood by her, not daring to intrude; and presently she got up sadly and said:

"Yes, I shall go with you—anything to get

away from it all"; and taking her cap from a peg, closed the window, locked the door, and joined me.

"I had half an idea," said I, as we moved toward the wood, "that you had a fancy for Cleon."

Anna smiled. "Cleon is a sweet boy and I am very fond of him; I suppose he thinks he is in love with me; but we are accustomed to these 'green and salad' loves; indeed, we are taught not to discourage them. It is good for a boy like Cleon to be in love with some one much older than himself that he can never marry; it keeps him out of mischief and does no one harm. One day he will reproach me and tell me I have encouraged him; I have not, you know, not the slightest; but he will say I have, and honestly think it for a few days; a little later he will get over it and be a good friend of mine to the end of my days."

We had a walk in the wood that has remained in my memory as one of the sweetest hours I spent at Tyringham. She soon accustomed herself to my knowledge of her secret, and this created an intimacy between us that was rare and pleasant.

At that early hour the woods were dark and

fresh, and the light upon a meadow we were approaching reminded me of a forgotten poet:

"I knew the flowers; I knew the leaves; I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long rank dark wood walks drenched with dew
Leading from lawn to lawn."

I quoted them to her and she responded to them; wanted to know the poet's name and more of his work; and as the autumn mist lay heavy on the lower pastures and the heavy fragrance of the autumn woods filled the air, I repeated to her those other lines of his:

"The woods decay; the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground;
Man comes and tills the earth and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only, cruel immortality consumes
Here at the Eastern limit of the day——"

She put a hand on my arm and stopped me:

"What is that again, 'Me only, cruel——'"

I repeated the line to her.

"What a subject," she said; "not for a Tithonus—no; what a thought to work into my group!"

I saw her meaning: Man might subdue Na-

ture to his use; what then? Was he to be nevertheless forever consumed by immortality? Here was the limit to his triumph; its shadow and reverse."

"What is the meaning of it all!" she said. "We are unhappy, do what we may, and it is out of our very unhappiness that we find something that replaces happiness—a sort of divine sorrow."

We had by this time traversed the wood and stood on a height which commanded the now deserted colony buildings. The sun was well up on the horizon; the birds hopping silently in the boughs, their spring and summer songs over; but the torrent filled the air with its noisy music as it dashed down the hillside, and beyond we saw it meandering in peaceful curves among the meadows.

"It is very beautiful," she said. "After all, there is joy enough in beauty, and it is no small thing"—she was looking absently over the meadows as she repeated—"it is no small thing that we can by art add to it."

"It is a mission of which you can well be proud," said I.

She looked at me and smiled gratefully.

As we returned I felt that she had shaken off some of the sorrow with which she had started.

CHAPTER XVII

DESIGNS ON ANNA OF ANN

MY stay at the Pater's farm was altogether delightful, for most of the day was spent in shooting. October was the only month open to all; but one permit was given to every ten inhabitants during November, and as there were forty-four, including the Pater's family, on the farm, it was easy to spare one to me. The Pater's younger son Phaines had another; he was not only a keen sportsman but an agreeable companion, and we killed much game, great and small. During a period of twenty years the shooting of bear had been prohibited, and now, with the extension of forests, bear had increased so as to be extremely plentiful. Deer, elk, caribou, moose, wild boar, and such destructive animals as lynxes, foxes, and wild cats, furnished all that a sportsman could ask in the way of variety. As the amount of game we killed far exceeded the consuming power of the neighborhood we daily telephoned to the County Supply Department for

instructions where to ship it, and we received our pay therefor.

During the winter, country people took their principal meal in the evening, the morning and midday hours being the pleasantest for being in the open air. The farm hands and we sportsmen took our luncheon with us and came home prepared for a large meal. Those who prepared the meal preferred to spend the dark hours from four to seven in the preparation of it, and to be free during the earlier part of the day.

The evening passed pleasantly. Every large farmhouse—and there were few small ones, except such as were, so to speak, dependent upon the large—had a room with a stage, specially applied to music and theatrical performances; it could also be used for such indoor games as squash or badminton. In this room those who wanted to practice music, etc., would assemble, and here they would occasionally give performances. When these farms sent their inmates to the city for a few months in the winter, hospitality was gladly extended them for the variety of performances which they could furnish; and by this exchange of population, the city people going to the country to harvest in the summer, and the farmers going to the city for amusement and in-

struction during the winter, monotony of life was eliminated.

One day when I was returning from a day's sport with Phaines, a buck packed on each of our horses, we were talking of marriage, and I asked him whether he did not intend to marry.

"I want to marry very much," said he.

I looked at him inquiringly.

"I have asked Anna of Ann a dozen times to marry me and she won't," continued he. "I can't see why she won't, either; she doesn't seem to care for anyone else; she might as well marry me, and then she could give all her time to that art of hers she is so devoted to."

"But she would have to work some part of the day at the farm, wouldn't she?"

"No; we are quite well enough off to let her give all her time to her art if she wanted to. It's this way: We have to furnish so much butter, or its equivalent in eggs, poultry, stock, etc., to the state for the amount of land we cultivate; then we have to support our farm hands, that is to say, either we have to give to each wages out of the surplus produce of the farm, over and above what we pay the state as rent, or we have to furnish the state extra produce for every farm hand we have. Well, our hands prefer the former of these

plans. The amount we give each farm hand depends on the amount of the surplus; every one of us is interested in making this surplus as large as possible. In this way we really have a great deal more than we can spend, and I could easily afford, out of my share of the surplus, to support Anna, so that she need not work at all."

"You are very prosperous then?"

"Yes, and why shouldn't we be? Now that we get grain at what it really costs instead of paying middlemen and speculators, railroad stockholders, elevators, etc., etc., everything is half the price it used to be. Then we need never fear that no one will buy our produce. The Supply Department can always tell us just where what we have is needed, and pays us for it on the spot. It does the transportation; and so the state needn't ask us an exorbitant rent, and can always pay us a remunerative price for our surplus."

"But you don't suppose Anna of Ann would be induced to marry you just because you could support her, do you?"

"She's a fool if she doesn't, as she apparently does not care for any one else."

That night after dinner most of the party adjourned to the music room, so I took a chair near

the Mater who was knitting by the big fire in the hall.

A benign smile lightened up her dear old round face as she made room for me to get close to the fire. I was curious to know what she thought of Anna, and said to her:

"Phaines tells me he wants to marry Anna of Ann."

"Isn't she foolish now not to marry him?" answered the Mater, putting down her work. "I am so fond of her, and Phaines and she would make an ideal couple. She could work all day at the art she is fond of and both ought to be as happy, all the year long, as larks in the spring."

"I have sometimes thought," said I, wishing to draw the Mater out, "that Anna looked sad."

"Well, she is a genius, and all geniuses look sad sometimes. It seems as though somebody has to be sad in order that others may be happy. Now, I am glad I am a plain farmer's wife and don't have to be sad. And yet," she added, taking up her knitting again, "I love to look at sad things. Have you ever seen Anna's statue of Bacchus?"

I had seen it and wondered at it until it was explained to me that the better Greek notion of Bacchus as the god of enthusiasm had been re-

stored to the Dionysan cult. Then I perceived that Anna had given to the wine god something of the discontent that lends charm to the statues of Antinoüs.

"Anna's thought doubtless is," said I, "that the highest enthusiasm springs from a sense of an unsatisfied need."

"Well, I like to look at it but I don't care to think about it. I like just to toast my toes by the fire these long winter evenings and know that our storehouse is full and our boys happy. But I do wish Anna would marry Phaines."

Assuredly, thought I, man is a variable thing —constructed upon lines so different that it is surprising one variety of man can at all understand the other. And yet, in view of the variety of occupations in which man must engage if he wants to satisfy his complex needs, how fortunate that the Mater could be happy only on her farm, and Anna happy only in her studio! And for the Mater and Phaines the question of marriage with Anna was one that could tarry for its solution year after year; while for Anna, her love for Ariston tormented her life, intruded into her art, saddened and inspired it.

I was interested, however, to discover that she had escaped from the thraldom of it for the time

at any rate; for on the next day, when I peeped into her studio early in the morning, she no longer threw a cloth over her clay, but, on the contrary, beckoned me in.

And I saw dimly growing out of a gigantic mass of clay the noble lineaments of an old man with shaggy projecting eyebrows and a beard that rivalled that of the Moses of Michael Angelo.

"It is only the bust," she said. She looked very lovely as with suppressed excitement she explained to me her thought, and her eyes usually dim grew bright. "It is to be a colossal figure, standing; I think there is something in it that is going to be suggested by the Creator of the Sixtine chapel as he stands creating Eve; but then, too, I see in the clay before me something more kindly, reminding me rather of Prospero; and yet he is to be triumphant; I think one arm will be lifted, half in joy and half in benediction, but his brow will be thoughtful and sad."

"And you have got rid of Ariston altogether?" asked I.

She blushed and pouted a little.

"You must never speak to me of Ariston again. I am glad to be free from him, in this at any rate —and it is your Tithonus that has rescued me.

If I were to put a legend to this sculpture—of course, I won't—but if I were to do so, it should be 'Me only, cruel immortality consumes.'"

"And yet this would express only a small part of the whole thing."

"And that is why no legend should ever be attached to sculpture; sculpture must tell her own story in her own way—legends belong to literature. Sculpture must owe nothing to any other art than her own." She was looking critically at the bust now, as though I were not in the room, but presently becoming conscious of my existence again, she added: "I value this legend because it started me on a new line of thought unhaunted by the old."

For days Anna was so gay that I began to wonder whether Ariston had not lost his opportunity, and I wondered so all the more when I saw little advances to Anna on his part unresponded to. One evening when he had felt himself discouraged by her, he said to me:

"I don't think Anna will ever care for anything but her art. I asked her to show me what she is doing and she refused—a little curtly, I thought."

"My dear Ariston," answered I, "do you suppose Anna is going to fall into your arms the mo-

ment you open them to her? You have treated her for years as though she did not exist, and now you are disappointed because at a first lordly approach she does not at once fall trembling at your feet."

"Am I really such a coxcomb as that?" asked Ariston.

"Don't take me too seriously," said I. "All I mean to suggest is that if Anna is worth winning she is worth wooing; she is absorbed in her work—her life is quite filled with it—and if you want her life to be filled with you, you must take some little trouble and exercise some little patience."

Ariston laughed good humoredly, and asked me how Lydia was doing. I had seen little of her. We met at meal-time, but so many sat down to every meal that I seldom found myself near her. I knew that she heard daily from Chairo and wrote daily to him, but more than this no one knew. Ariston explained to me that the forces marshalled in opposition to one another were now fairly organized, but that it was impossible to tell with whom the victory would rest. The leader of the government, Peleas, was not a big man; on the contrary, many charged him with being narrow. He was bitterly opposed to the

amnesty bill; regarded Chairo as a firebrand who must be suppressed, and asked, if blood could deluge the streets of New York one day and amnesty be voted to those responsible therefor the next, what security could the community hope for in the future? Would not such action serve to encourage all discontent to take the shape of riot and revolt?

There was, of course, much truth in his view. The Demetrian council had met, but their decision was kept absolutely secret. Iréné had now altogether recovered and was expected to direct the Demetrian forces in the legislature; she would not, however, take the floor; it was considered that their spokesman ought to be a man. Ariston was disqualified by the fact that he was acting for Chairo; so they decided on an extremely judicious, though not very eloquent speaker, by name Arkles. Ariston returned to New York the next day.

CHAPTER XVIII

A DREAM

THE day that Ariston left, the Mater summoned me to her room to make plans for the day, and I found Lydia there, engaged in moving a bracket of beautifully wrought iron that she found too low. While I talked to the Mater I found my eyes following Lydia's movements as she stood with her back to me unscrewing the bracket from the wall. The Mater soon came to an understanding with me and left the room to attend to her household duties. I was left alone with Lydia.

She had by this time unscrewed the bracket and was holding it higher up against the wall, estimating the height, prior to fastening it in again.

"You will never be able to fasten it at that height," said I, "without a ladder."

She looked round at me, still holding the bracket against the wall, and I wished I had the art of a sculptor to immortalize her as she stood.

She smiled as she said: "How about a chair, Xenos?"

I immediately brought a chair to her.

She stepped upon it but slipped. I was holding the back of the chair, and as she slipped I put out my hands to catch her. For a moment I held her in my arms. She had stumbled in such a way that her head was thrown a little back over my shoulder, and before she could recover herself her face was so close to mine that I could have kissed her with the slightest possible movement of my face.

I thought that I had conquered the feeling which she had inspired in me the first moment I set eyes on her on Tyringham hill. But the blood, rushing through my veins, and my beating pulses, as I held her for a moment in my arms, told me that I was still hopelessly in love with her.

She seemed altogether unaware of it, for recovering her balance she laughed a little, looked at me straight in the eyes, her brows a little lifted, and her lovely lips parted by a smile.

"I slipped," she said. "Wasn't it silly of me!"

And jumping on the chair she got to work again.

I watched her work and drank deep draughts of delicious poison as I watched.

As soon as she had finished she looked at her work critically and said: "That is very much better!" and turning to me, added, "Isn't it?"

I could not help wondering whether she was as unconscious of the effect she produced as she seemed to be. But she gave me no chance of discovering, for finding I did not answer but stood there silent, like a fool, she added:

"I must be off! *Au revoir!*" and taking up her screwdriver and other things, went with the appearance of utter unconsciousness out of the room.

All that day my mind was haunted by her; I knew it was folly to harbor hope, and yet I harbored it fatuously; her image came in and out of my mind as the sun on a rainy day in and out of the clouds, to delight and to torment.

That evening the orchestra played a minuet of Mozart so charmingly that Lydia rose, and saying, "We really must dance to that," made a sweeping bow.

I jumped up at the challenge, and soon eight of us were on our feet. Lydia was my partner. I was so absorbed by her every movement, so entranced by the occasional touch of her ungloved

hand, that I was aware of nothing else in the room. Surely, thought I, there never was a Tanagra figure to compare with hers.

When we separated for the night I was in a fever. It was useless to go to bed, and I went out into the bright cold air. I saw the light in her room and stood in front of it, cursing myself for a love-sick fool. But the cold drove me in—and to bed. For hours I tossed about, and sleep overtook me at last, but only to torture me; it played with me, threw me on my back, as it were, at one moment, only to jump me on my feet the next; and throughout it all I saw Lydia at odd intervals in every conceivable mood; now smiling and beckoning, now turning from me as though offended, and, again, treating me with indifference. But at last I seemed to have passed through a period of deep unconsciousness, for I woke suddenly to find Lydia before me more lovely than I had ever seen her. I was not surprised—although I know I ought to have been—to find her in a dress that showed her bosom, her hair hung like a curtain of gold about her; her long eyes were wet with tears, and yet there shone out of them a light so mystic and divine that I threw myself at her feet. She held out a hand to me and lifted me up. I did not know the meaning of her

tears or of her graciousness, but as I rose nearer to her she smiled. In an ecstasy I touched her lips with mine; she did not withdraw them; nay, she kissed me on the brow and cheek, fond and despairing kisses, for her tears fell upon my face and they were warm.

How long did it last? Was it for a moment or for all time? A blaze of light pouring through my window roused me. I jumped out of bed and looked stupidly out on the old sugar house that Anna had converted into a studio. It was nothing but a dream.

"Nothing but a dream!" thought I exultingly. "But no one can ever deprive me of it. I have felt her kisses on my lips and her tears. All my life long that memory will belong to me—and suffice."

I sat down, weak and tired, closing my eyes to recall the vanished dream; and it came back to me, every detail of it, so vividly that I jumped up from my chair with the thought that it was not all mere fancy; something had happened, something had actually happened, of this I felt sure, and was it possible—I hardly dared entertain the thought—was it possible she had dreamed also of me?

I dressed automatically, breakfasted automat-

ically, strolled automatically about the grounds. I must see Lydia. I returned to the house, asked the Mater where Lydia was, and was told that she could be found in the room where she had been the previous morning. I almost ran there, and, on opening the door, saw her seated in a high-backed oak chair, very erect, with her hair about her and something resembling tears in her eyes as I had seen her in my dream. She had tapestry in her hands, but they rested idly in her lap. She did not move when I entered. She seemed to be expecting me.

I advanced toward her slowly with something like awe in my heart.

"Did you have a dream in the night?" I at last summoned courage to ask.

She did not answer, and the look in her eyes baffled me.

"Did you dream of *me*?" I asked huskily—almost aghast.

Still she said nothing but kept fixed upon me her inscrutable eyes.

I hardly dared to go on, but in my folly I continued.

"Did you"—stammered I—but I could not put my question in words.

Tears sprang to her eyes, and she sat there just

as I had seen her in my dream, save that she wore the usual chiton.

I was in an anguish of suspense, but it came to an end, for she shook her head sadly.

"Don't!" she said. "Don't!"

I fell at her feet and buried my head in her lap. She did not shrink from me. On the contrary, I felt her hand stroke my head, and I knew it was not love but compassion.

I knelt there a full minute, but even to the luxury of grief I had not the right to surrender. So I rose abruptly. I took her hand, kissed it, held it for a moment in mine, and said:

"I shall not intrude on you again, Lydia; I love you consumedly, but I shall not intrude on you again."

And laying her hand gently upon her lap I turned abruptly and left the room.

Next day I left Tyringham.

Almost the entire population of the farm—save only Lydia, her mother, and the few farm hands necessary to care for the stock—and these last had their holiday later—repaired to New York. Most of them went to the building in which lived Anna's family. Ariston and I returned to our old quarters.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LEGISLATURE MEETS

AT the first meeting of the Assembly—for the Legislature now sat no longer at Albany but at New York—Masters arose as soon as the opening formalities were over and read a bill of amnesty for all concerned in the so-called riot of the preceding month. He stated that an identical bill was being at that moment offered in the Senate, and moved a joint session of both houses to consider it.

Peleas, the leader of the government, consented to the joint session, but asked that the matter be referred to a committee. He pointed out that the facts were not clearly before the house, and that it was essential that a committee should investigate the facts and present them in a report to the joint session.

Masters opposed reference to an investigating committee. He contended that the very object of the bill was to prevent the issues, that had caused their streets to be stained by blood, from remain-

ing confounded by personal animosities. A great institution had been attacked; that institution was, in the opinion of many, of the highest social value. It was possible that in some respects it had a lesson to learn; it was important that the lesson be learned free from the heat of such bitter hatred as must result from an attempt to punish those who had been driven by misguided zeal to acts of violence. Already the investigation had shown how far the desperate effort of those implicated to shield themselves might distort facts; it had even been alleged—and his strong, honest countenance glowed for a moment with indignation as he spoke—it had even been alleged that the whole responsibility for the attack rested not upon Balbus and his followers but upon a woman! He would not waste the time of the house now by pointing out the diverse reasons why an investigation was to be avoided. Obviously, what the country needed, and he thought he could say asked for, was oblivion. Why, then, an investigating committee?

Arkles next arose—and as he was known to be the spokesman of the cult he was listened to with breathless attention. He altogether appreciated the weight of the argument against an investigating committee just made, but as had also been

justly said, it was possible that the cult had a lesson to learn. In order to learn that lesson it had to know the facts, and the facts had not yet been properly determined. Moreover, something was due to law and order. It might, in the end, be considered the better course to allow the punishment which those involved in the riot had already suffered, to suffice, and to allow oblivion to obliterate, to the utmost possible, the whole matter from their annals. But the state would not do its duty if it did not thoroughly investigate the crime it was condoning; and though he regretted to oppose a man who had always been regarded as a pillar not only of the government but of the cult, he nevertheless felt it to be his duty to support the government in asking for the appointment of an investigating committee.

Masters, who in his heart, though he could not admit it to himself, feared the consequences to Neaera of an investigating committee, maintained his opposition; Chairo, also, who desired to avoid, at all hazards, the necessity of Lydia's appearing before such a committee, was opposed to the investigation. Both were also influenced by the desire to carry the bill promptly by a *coup de main*, if this were at all possible.

The motion of Peleas was carried by a large

majority, and the result produced much discouragement in Chairo's ranks. Masters, however, immediately arose and moved that in view of the importance of the question and the impossibility of calmly discussing any other matter until the fate of the amnesty bill was settled, the house adjourn, and not sit again until after the elections and after the joint session of both houses had completed its mission.

Peleas and Arkles both approved of this motion, and the passage of it, with only a few scattering votes in the negative, to a certain extent restored the confidence of the opposition. For if the government to this extent recognized the importance of the issue raised by the amnesty bill, it was possible that in the end some compromise would be agreed upon that would give substantial satisfaction.

Ariston took no part in this preliminary skirmish. As we walked home together he expressed to me his satisfaction at what had occurred. Peleas had not displayed all the narrowness of which he was capable, and the judiciousness of both Masters and Arkles indicated a willingness on the part of both to bring the matter to a fair adjustment. I was myself, however, concerned by the probability that I should now have to appear before the inves-

tigating committee. My regard for Masters, as well as a liking for Neaera, of which, in spite of her duplicity, I could not altogether rid myself, made me unwilling to state all that had occurred when I conveyed Chairo's message to Balbus. I had hoped that the passage of the amnesty bill would have made the hearing of testimony unnecessary; so I asked Ariston whether I would be compelled to testify. To my great relief Ariston assured me that my peculiar position as a guest of the community, made it quite possible for me to ask and obtain a dispensation; he promised to arrange it for me.

On reaching our quarters we betook ourselves as usual to the bath, which, at this season of the year, was warmed to a suitable temperature, and after our plunge, as we lay upon our couches smoking cigarettes, I asked Ariston whether he had seen Anna of Ann since our return to New York.

"No," answered he, "it is difficult to see her; she is working all day at the factory, in order to earn a full month's holiday later; she is eager to complete the sculpture on which she is engaged; and that father of hers never invites any one to his house!"

"I have never met her father," said I. "Her

mother I have seen at the Lydia's, but her father—what kind of a man is he?"

"He is a miser!"

"A miser!" exclaimed I. "In a Collectivist state! How is that possible?"

"It could not be possible in a purely Collectivist state; but as soon as individual industry took an important development it became possible."

I was not clear about this, and Ariston, seeing the confusion in my face, explained.

"Take this case of Campbell's, for example"—Campbell was the name of Anna's father—"as soon as Masters got at the head of several industrial enterprises and had obtained a valuable credit in the community, Campbell saw that there was here a credit to exploit and a real service to be rendered to the public, so he induced Masters to start a bank, and the bank of Masters & Campbell is known all over the United States. But Campbell can explain all this better than I can; and although Campbell never asks any one to his house, we can ask him to ours; or, better still, we can ask the whole family to dine at Theodore's—you must see Theodore's; his restaurant is one of our institutions. Come," he added, "let us go at once to their building; we may catch Anna of Ann in the tea-room, and agree upon a day."

We dressed rapidly, and on the way I expressed my disgust at Anna's having to work in a factory when all her time might, under other circumstances, be given to her art.

"Are you quite sure," asked Ariston, "that the enforced rest from her artistic work is such a bad thing? How much of Michael Angelo's time was spent in the purely mechanical part of his art? Then, too, there is no reason why she should be compelled to work in the factory at all. Men are all obliged to give the required quota of work to the state, but women have always been granted dispensations, provided somebody undertook either to do their work for them or to relieve the state of their support. Now if Campbell were not a miser Anna need never do state work. And if Anna were to marry an industrious and capable man she need never do state work."

I looked at Ariston significantly, and he caught my eye.

"I saw Iréné yesterday," he said, "and we spoke of it. She is a noble woman, and the eagerness and delight with which she heard me speak of Anna made my eyes fill. She is altogether devoted now to her work in the cloister; she is absorbed in her boy, who seems to combine all the vigor of Chairo with her own gentleness; she

teaches not only him but a class of boys of his age, and is doing a splendid work there. I have quite given up the idea that she will ever marry again."

It was pretty clear that, although Ariston was willing to admit he had given up the idea of marrying Iréné, he was not willing to admit that he was seriously entertaining the idea of marrying any one else. So I returned to our original subject:

"But how can Campbell hoard?" asked I. "Isn't your money valueless two years after its issue?"

"Yes, but Campbell has made a money of his own; besides, before he did this, he hoarded gold."

"But I thought all the gold was owned by the state and used exclusively for foreign exchanges?"

"So it is—as currency; but the state could not refuse to allow skillful workers in the precious metals to exercise their skill in ornaments, and so there comes into the market not only state manufacture of gold and silver, but also for some years past the products of individual enterprise. Don't you remember the beautiful necklace Neaera wears? Lydia, too; even Iréné wears a heavy bracelet of solid gold."

"And do you mean to say that Campbell hoards ornaments?"

"My dear fellow, there is nothing unusual in hoarding ornaments; most of the wealth of the Rajahs at the time of the conquest of India consisted of ornaments and precious stones; and later, the hoarding of ornaments by the natives constituted one of the financial difficulties with which the English Government had to contend. Then, too, a miser is not actuated by intelligence; he is the slave of an instinct—the hoarding instinct. He must hoard something, and as there is no gold coin to hoard, Campbell hoards gold ornaments."

We found that both Ann and Anna had left the tea-room, so we ventured to the inhospitable door of their apartment. Anna opened it to us and ushered us into a room where her father was sitting. He was a small man with an intelligent face, but the hair grew on his head in a manner that was characteristic; some people would have called him bald, but he was not bald; the hair was extremely thin, so thin that it gave his scalp the appearance of not being perfectly clean. He greeted us courteously and inquiringly, as though we could not have called upon him except for some definite purpose. So Ariston at once suggested that he and his family should join us that evening at Theodore's.

"We should be delighted," said he. "But we are expecting our boy this evening—Harmes."

Harmes was the young man who had been convicted of using violence with Neaera and had been sent to the Penal Colony.

"You will want to spend your first evening with Harmes *en famille*," said Ariston, "so let us say to-morrow."

Campbell consulted his wife, and accepted.

"When does Harmes arrive?" asked Ariston.

"We are expecting him every moment," answered Campbell.

"To-morrow, then, at Theodore's at seven," said Ariston, and we left.

The absence of all shame as to the imprisonment of Harmes struck me as remarkable, but Ariston soon set me straight.

"You are possessed by the notions that prevailed in your day—notions that resulted in great part from the fact that most of your criminals were poor and dirty. Your system created a residuum—a criminal class—as surely as the thresher by sifting out the wheat leaves behind the residuum we call chaff. And the residuum of your competitive system, which recognized practically only one prize (that is to say, money), necessarily consisted of those who being unable to earn this prize

became destitute; of these the most enterprising were criminals, the least enterprising, paupers. This is the state of things to which Collectivism puts an end. Because all work for the state all are entitled to an equal share in the national income; there are no destitute, no paupers, no criminal *class*. Indeed, it may be said that the criminal, such as you were accustomed to see him in your police courts, does not exist among us at all. Occasionally a man is tempted beyond endurance, as in the case of Harmes, or in the case of Chairo and his confederates. But if Chairo were convicted and sent to a penal colony, he would on his release recover the social position to which he was by his conduct entitled without regard to the fact that he had served a term. No one would think of applying the word 'criminal' to either Chairo or Harmes. Of course there are men born among us, as among you, with what may be termed truly criminal instinct — moral perverts who take pleasure in causing pain. Such are rarely curable. They seldom return to social life. They are treated like lepers. We try to make their lot as little wretched as we can. But we recognize that the happiness of the entire community must be preferred to that of these exceptions; they are kept in confinement, and

above all, they are not allowed to perpetuate the type."

There was nothing new in all this. We were as familiar in my day with this reasoning as Aristston. But we were dominated by our institutions, our penal codes, our criminal lawyers, our prisons, and, above all, our amazing doctrines of individual liberty, which vindicated it for the criminal and disregarded it for the workingman. So that the industrious were bound to as enforced labor as the convict all the time, whereas the convict was periodically let loose on the community to idle and to steal.

CHAPTER XX

ON FLAVORS AND FINANCE

NEXT evening we met at Theodore's restaurant and sat down to a dinner, which reminded me of the best I had ever tasted in Paris.

Theodore himself was a type. Rather short in stature and stout, he had a large head off which was combed thick hair, treated very much as a sculptor would treat hair in a monument. For Theodore took himself very seriously. He believed gastronomy to be one of the fine arts, and that he was its high priest. He would never allow any one to joke about it, and admitted to his restaurant only those who behaved toward him with the respect to which he felt entitled.

He received us at the door with a napkin over his arm, for of this napkin he was as proud as a British peer of his robes; it was the emblem of his art, and as such he bore it proudly. Ariston greeted him and introduced us to him each by name. He bowed at every introduction.

"And now," said Ariston, turning to us, "you have before you the greatest culinary artist in the world."

Theodore smiled sadly—as indeed he might—for possessed of the finest palate in New York, he had for years been confined, by an ungovernable indigestion, to a milk diet.

Theodore showed us to a private room, and explained that he meant to open the ceremonies with a *pot au feu garbure*, and that the cheese used on the toast had just arrived from France. He left us to seat ourselves, and very soon after we were settled, the door was thrown open by his son and Theodore appeared, with an air of almost stern solemnity, holding a silver soup tureen in both hands, the inevitable napkin on his arm. He placed the soup tureen on a side table, lifted off the lid, and with religious care ladled the soup into plates, carefully providing that each had his share of the preciously prepared toast.

A chorus of approval from us brought the sad smile back into his face again, and as we sat he told us that he had "created" a new dish for us. He was very particular about the use of this word "created." He kept a list of his special dishes, and Ariston told us afterwards that he had once asked Theodore for this list, describing it as the

list of his inventions. Theodore had offendedly corrected him. "*Creations*, you mean." The dish he had created for us that day was a pheasant stuffed with ortolans, all cooked in their own juice —*braisé*—over a slow fire during six hours. He explained that it was a great mistake to roast pheasants. For those who insisted on his roasting them he provided himself with vine twigs (sarments), the fire made with them imparting a subtle flavor to the meat. But the meat of a pheasant though delicious was dry, and the method he had adopted was altogether the best for bringing out the full meaning of the bird. The same was true of ortolans.

Theodore did not appear more than twice: at the opening ceremony of the soup and at the climax—the newly created combination. While we were partaking of this last, he told us of a great discussion that was about to be settled as to the respective flavor of three kinds of mutton. He had been enlisted on the side of the Long Island breed, and had that day selected the sheep which was to have the honor of representing Long Island interests. He explained that much depended on the choice of the animal. In his selection he had picked out one upon whose hind legs were the tooth marks of the shepherd dog, for these marks

showed him to be so keen on sweet pasture that it took an actual bite to drive him from it.

Theodore was a determined individualist and warm supporter of Chairo's. It was insufferable, he said, that an artist like himself—and bowing condescendingly to Anna, he added—"and our young lady, too"—should have to work half the day for the state, when under individualistic conditions thousands of rich men would have been delighted to cover him with gold in recognition of his services. I could not help thinking of a distinguished cook I had known in Paris once who, under these very individualistic conditions, had struggled with debt all his life and never escaped from it.

After Theodore had served the birds he withdrew. We were enjoying the dish when Anna surprised us by saying, as though she had just made the discovery:

"This is really quite nice!"

"Why, my dear child," said her father, "it is a *chef d'œuvre*! What have you been thinking about all this time?"

"I have been looking at Theodore; do you know, he has a good head to sculpt."

We all laughed at this view of Theodore, and Harmes said:

"This kind of thing is rather a jump from what we have at the colony."

"Is the food bad there?" asked I.

"No, not bad; but nothing nice until we can afford to pay for it with the wages we earn."

This led to a long account by Harmes of how the colony was managed and the system—often proposed in my day—for slowly restoring the inmates of a reformatory to social life.

Harmes spoke so freely of the whole subject that I ventured to ask him:

"And Neaera—was it her fault or yours?"

Harmes' eye flashed a moment, and then looking around the table, and finally at Ariston, asked:

"Can I speak freely?"

"Certainly," said Ariston. "Our friend here knows, perhaps, more about Neaera than you do."

"Am I to condole with you, then?" asked Harmes.

"No," I answered. "I had the advantage over you of age and experience."

"She is a little devil," said Harmes. "And the devil of it is that if I were to see her to-morrow I believe I should want to make love to her again."

"Harmes!" exclaimed his mother protestingly.

"Oh, I have learned my lesson! I won't make love to her again; but the amazing thing is that after all she has cost me I cannot make up my mind to dislike her as I ought."

"You needn't dislike her," said Ariston, "any more than you need dislike a stone that breaks your leg."

"I cannot but think, however," said Campbell, "that the punishment was out of proportion to the offense."

"No," said Ann, to my great surprise. "You must not say that. No one has suffered more from Harmes' confinement in the colony than I, and yet I am bound to say that violence is to my mind —and to the mind of all of us women—so dangerous a thing that I prefer my son should be an innocent victim than that it should go unpunished."

We had a delicious bottle of California Burgundy with our birds, and I asked whether this was provided by the state.

"Fortunately," said Campbell, "the state has never taken the vineyards out of the hands of those who owned them at the time of the new constitution. It monopolizes the distillation of liquor, but all wines not containing more than six per cent alcohol are produced by individual enterprise. The owners have to contribute a stipulated quota to the

state, as in the case of all agricultural products. The surplus belongs to them; but as the money they get from the state has no value two years after issue, we find in this very class the best customers for our bank."

We had by this time finished our dinner; the coffee and cigars were before us, and the company settled themselves for a long talk on the working of their system, all of which was of great interest to me, a traveller from the past.

The minutes passed rapidly in this interesting exchange of experiences until Anna and Ann, who had long shown signs of *ennui*, arose to depart, and Ariston, noting their desire to leave, paid the bill and we left.

CHAPTER XXI

THE INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE

MEANWHILE, the investigating committee had been appointed, and the day came when witnesses were to be examined. The committee sat in the afternoon only, so as to make it possible for all to attend without sacrificing their state work. Masters, of course, was there, Chairo, too, and Ariston, who continued to act for Chairo. Ariston had consulted with me as to the wisdom of preparing Masters for the testimony implicating Neaera, which we knew would be elicited. But I preferred to allow events to take their course.

The first witness called was one of those who had attacked the House of Detention and been wounded. He had clearly remained devoted to Chairo; for to every question put to him, which tended to implicate Chairo, he displayed astonishing forgetfulness; but as soon as the examination bore upon my interview with Balbus, at which he

had been present, he stated every circumstance exactly as it had happened, except that he was, perhaps, more severe on Neaera than she deserved.

"She would not allow Balbus to speak," he said. "She walked right over from the corner where she was writing and wouldn't allow Balbus to say a word."

He even insisted that it was Neaera who had ordered my arrest, and personally supervised the act of binding me to the chair.

Masters' brow grew dark at this attack on Neaera, and he undertook to cross-examine the witness, but did it clumsily and ineffectually. His principal effort was to induce the witness to admit that Neaera had already received orders from Chairo that an attempt at rescue was to be made whatever apparently contradictory messages might be received, whether purporting to come from him, Chairo, or from others.

This line of cross-examination incensed Chairo, who was indirectly charged by it with having sent me on a message for the purpose of assuming an air of innocence, when he all the time intended the attempt at rescue to be made.

Ariston with great difficulty kept Chairo from angry interruption; and on redirect examination, which he was allowed in Chairo's interest to con-

duct, strengthened the evidence of Chairo's good faith.

The next witness was clearly of Hibernian descent, for he at once took the entire committee and audience into his confidence. "I'll tell you all about it," he said. "I'm the janitor of the 'Liberty' offices, and I know all about it from the beginning."

He then proceeded to give a complete history of his own life from the earliest years he could remember, and he assured us that he would go still further back if he could; that he had nothing to conceal from the committee, and would tell them "all about it from the very beginning."

Over and over again he was interrupted by the committee, who complained of the irrelevancy of his testimony. "And would you have me hold anything back?" he said indignantly. "Haven't I sworn to tell the whole truth as well as nothing but the truth?"

"We only want to hear you in connection with the organization and arming of forces by Chairo with a view to violence and the subsequent attempt upon the House of Detention."

"And haven't I known Chairo all my life," responded the witness triumphantly, "and isn't that just what I'm telling you? Just leave me quiet,"

he added, " and I'll tell you the whole thing from the beginning."

The committee, thinking time would in the end be saved, gave the witness rope, of which he was not slow to take advantage, for he interlarded his narrative with stories so comic that the committee was at last obliged to interfere again. But his wit was equal to every emergency, and after an hour spent in the futile effort to extract information from him, he was released. A broad wink at Chairo as he left the witness box set the audience in a roar, but did not help Chairo's case.

The third witness was another of the party which had attacked the House of Detention, and he clearly was actuated by no desire to shield Chairo, for he testified to details so damaging to him that no one had any longer any doubt as to Chairo having organized a vast conspiracy against the state. He had himself been one of Chairo's lieutenants, and he gave the names of the men that had joined him, the weapons that had been secured, the date of his first instructions from Chairo, and their tenor; in fact, nothing was left untold. He was not present when I carried Chairo's message to Balbus.

Ariston cross-examined him with great skill, tripped him up as to some of his dates and details,

and even threw some confusion into his testimony regarding the character of the instructions. But as to the main facts his testimony was unshaken.

The examination and cross-examination of these three witnesses occupied the whole of the first day; and as Chairo, Ariston, and I returned slowly to our quarters we found it difficult to speak. Chairo was still angry with Masters, and expressed himself on the subject in a few explosive sentences. Ariston reminded Chairo that Masters was an old admirer of Neaera's, and I felt almost guilty at withholding from them that he had actually married her.

After our plunge, Ariston and I brightened up a little, but Chairo remained profoundly depressed.

"The fact is," he said, "I am beginning to look at things from a different point of view. This military organization of ours was a gigantic mistake."

"Violence can only be justified," said Ariston, "by some public necessity or injustice; no isolated personal grievance can possibly justify it."

"We thought that this whole Demetrian cult had become a social evil, but others evidently do not."

Chairo's manner had so changed from what it

was when I first met him among the hills of Tyringham that my mind was set upon inquiring as to the cause, and I could not help suspecting that his misgivings were for the most part due to Lydia.

I felt that I was *de trop* and found some excuse for leaving them.

Later Ariston told me that although Chairo was profoundly discouraged, strange to say, he had expressed little concern about himself or his political aims; what he used to describe as "The Cause," and really meant his own ambition, seemed to have entirely passed out of his mind; his whole concern now was for Lydia.

The examination of witnesses during the next few days resulted in a confirmation of all the facts brought out on the first day; Chairo had clearly undertaken a vast and dangerous conspiracy against the state; he had, in good faith, sought at the last moment to prevent violence, and Neaera was wholly responsible for the attempt at rescue. Masters and his following alone persisted in endeavoring to shield Neaera. According to them, instructions had been given by Chairo to both Balbus and Neaera that in case of any accident happening to himself, the attempt was to be made to rescue him, and that this attempt was to serve

as an excuse for the violence which they felt indispensable to the defeat of the Demetrian cult.

As the examination was drawing to a close, 'Ariston pointed out to me that I was probably the only man who could persuade Masters of his mistake; he also urged that not only Chairo's fate hung in the balance but Lydia's also.

'Ariston told me that Lydia's letters to him plainly showed that her own hopes as to the passage of the amnesty bill had come to an end, and that the subject under discussion between them now was what they should do in case the amnesty bill was not passed.

While we were talking over the matter in our apartment, we were astonished to receive the visit of Masters, for of late Masters had failed to recognize any of our party in the courthouse, and we feared that the issue regarding Neaera's responsibility had occasioned a permanent break in the ranks of the opposition.

When Masters entered the room he made no pretense of cordiality; he apologized conventionally for intruding, and explained that his visit was due to a letter received from Neaera that day, in which she had urged him to see me, as she was convinced I could set his mind at rest regarding her innocence.

I perceived without difficulty that Neaera must have been reduced to desperate straits in order to have recourse to such a reckless measure, and that the correspondence between Masters and her must have betrayed considerable doubt in Masters's mind as to the truth of her statements concerning her connection with the business. I was determined to learn from Masters as far as possible what was his present attitude to Neaera. So I asked:

"You have heard the witnesses; what is your own impression of the matter?"

"You could not expect me to believe them, could you?"

There was an expression of agony on Masters's brow which made me feel strongly drawn to him.

"Shall Ariston stay while we talk about this?" asked I.

"Yes," said Masters, turning to Ariston. "It is well that you should know that Neaera is my wife."

Ariston put up both hands with an involuntary expression of dismay, the significance of which Masters did not fail to take in. He looked at me half in despair, half in inquiry.

"Ariston understands now," I said, "why you have undertaken to vindicate Neaera."

"I should have undertaken to vindicate her in any event," answered Masters. "She is a woman, and a concerted effort is being directed toward making a scapegoat of her."

"The witnesses," I answered, "are certainly unanimous on the subject."

"From what you say," Masters said, "I gather that you do not disbelieve them."

The veins in Masters's forehead were swelling with the effort he was making to hide his indignation.

"I have been at great pains to be released from the obligation of testifying," I answered, "because I have not wished to injure her, because, above all," I added, "I have not wished to injure you."

We had remained standing during this conversation, but when I said this—and in saying it I tried to make Masters feel that I was sorry for him—he turned away a little and sank sideways upon a chair. He leaned one arm on the back of it, bowing his head upon his hand, and after a moment's pause turned to me again; his face was white now.

"If that is your reason for not testifying I am obliged to you," he said. "But which is your real reason—to spare Neaera or to spare me?"

"I have no more reason for sparing Neaera than that she is a woman; I have every reason for sparing you."

Masters looked at me inquiringly.

"I have nothing to conceal from you," I continued.

"Then tell me just what happened," answered Masters.

I took a seat and so did Ariston, and thought for a moment how I could tell the facts in so far as they concerned the attempt at rescue without disclosing Neaera's designs upon myself. I confined myself to the part she played when I gave Chairo's message to Balbus.

"Might not this have been done by Neaera," asked Masters, "in compliance with a prior understanding with Chairo?"

"I cannot believe," said I, "that there was any such understanding; indeed, I am convinced that if Neaera was not herself the cause of Chairo's capture, she was a party to it." I told then the story of the tampering with Chairo's carriage.

"Could not this, too, have been a part of the plot?" pleaded Masters desperately.

"A part of Neaera's plot, not a part of Chairo's. No one can talk ten minutes with Chairo now without being convinced that his first object

was to get possession of Lydia; the political intrigue in the latest stage of the affair became altogether a secondary matter."

"Neaera was not," interrupted Ariston, "pleased with the rôle Lydia played in the matter. At one time there was no small intimacy between Chairo and Neaera; Neaera is not a woman to see her place taken by another without vindictiveness. In preventing the escape of Chairo she was serving a double purpose; she kept the issue alive, and she satisfied a personal pique."

Masters looked at me as though to learn my opinion on this view.

"I gathered this: from a few words Neaera dropped after she had set me free," I said; "she told me that all Chairo wanted was Lydia."

Masters jumped up from his chair.

"Then you would have me believe," said he, "that my wife is a vixen!"

At this I jumped up too.

"Masters," I said, "I have told you the facts because I felt you were entitled to them. If you cannot stand hearing the facts you should not have asked for them."

There was a moment when it seemed doubtful whether we might not come to blows; but the

flash went out of Masters's eye as he looked at me, and presently he held out his hand to me and said:

"I am sure you have intended to render me a service, and I suppose in the end"—he paused a moment as he shook my hand, and added—"in the end it will prove to be so."

Then, taking up his cap and cloak, he said:

"At any rate there need be no hard feeling between myself and Chairo, but I am a little dazed by what I have heard, and so I shall ask you both to keep this interview confidential for a time. In a few days I shall know better just how to act."

CHAPTER XXII

"TREASONS, STRATAGEMS, AND SPOILS"

BUT as Masters walked homeward his irresolution disappeared. He saw that his love for Neaera and his *amour propre* had blinded him to the real significance of the testimony elicited by the investigating committee. Taking together the unanimity of this testimony, the breaking down of Chairo's carriage, the *tendresse* that Neaera had certainly once entertained for Chairo, the duplicity with which he had over and over again heard Neaera charged, certain ambiguities in some of her own statements, and this last barefaced appeal to me, there could be no more doubt. He rehearsed the interview at which he had asked her to marry him; he had been trapped by a show of indignation and a tearful eye.

By the time he reached his rooms his mind was made up. He sat down and wrote the following letter:

"DEAR NEAERA: I am afraid that the facts which have come to my knowledge leave no doubt as to your being responsible for the attack on the House of Detention. You are charged, too, with having tampered with Chairo's carriage in order to prevent his escape with Lydia. Shall I investigate this matter, or would it not perhaps be better for you to turn over the leaf and start a clean page somewhere else? I am prepared to do what is needful in order to make this easy to you, and send you by the messenger who hands this to you money for your immediate necessities. Should you wish your mother to accompany you, I shall provide for her also. Meanwhile, of course, we can arrange to undo the marriage that was somewhat hastily celebrated.

"Yours,
"MASTERS."

Neaera was not far from New York. She and her mother were both occupying a cottage belonging to Masters in New Jersey, behind the Palisades. Her mother was a widow and a cipher. She had been a helpless spectator of her daughter's too brilliant adventures, and was accustomed to sudden changes.

When Neaera received Masters's letter she sent word to him she would be in New York that night. Masters on receiving the message packed a small portmanteau and went to Boston,

leaving word with his aunt, who kept house for him, to receive Neaera should she arrive.

Masters was unwilling to subject himself to a scene with Neaera. While his messenger was away evidence had been presented to him which left no doubt as to Neaera having tampered with Chairo's carriage; and this was more than sufficient as a last straw. He felt he had been unaccountably weak in his previous personal encounters with her and that she was now counting upon this weakness. It is not easy for a man to turn a woman out of his house, nor to hand over to the authorities a political refugee who has entrusted herself to his care. To keep Neaera in his rooms under the circumstances would have been consistent neither with what he owed the state nor with what he owed himself. He trusted, therefore, to Neaera's intelligence to conclude from his departure that his decision was irrevocable.

Meanwhile, Lydia had left Tyringham and returned to New York. This had not happened without considerable negotiation, for it had been part of the understanding upon which Chairo had been released on parole that Lydia was to remain away from New York. The intention of this arrangement was to prevent Chairo from further

compromising Lydia, pending the determination of his case. But Lydia had been of late so much disturbed by Chairo's letters that she had come to a decision which she proceeded at once, if possible, to carry out, and as a first step toward doing so, it was indispensable that she should go to New York.

She sent, therefore, to Iréné the letter from Chairo which had particularly exercised her and asked Iréné whether, under the circumstances, she could not once more be received at the cloister, no longer as a Demetrian but as one in retreat, in order that she might concert with Iréné and other members of the council as to the course she proposed to pursue.

The letter from Chairo—or rather the extract from it—which she sent to Iréné ran as follows:

"I could ask no one but you to believe how differently my own acts appear to me when I looked back upon them some weeks ago with the glamour that self-deception threw around them and when I hear them to-day coldly recited in the witness box. During the examination I have asked myself whether the witnesses I have heard testifying before the investigating committee were really telling about me, or were not rather telling of events which have happened only in a nightmare. And when I push my self-examination further, I see that the difference lies in this: At the

time I prepared our forces for violence I was thinking of myself; now, I am thinking of you.

"I do not disguise from myself that the story narrated by more than a dozen witnesses regarding my actions prior to your acceptance of the mission, condemns me to an extent that makes the passage of an amnesty bill—so far as I am concerned—difficult if not impossible. The question, therefore, arises, What am I to do? I am perfectly prepared to take my punishment myself, but it almost makes me die to think that I am dragging you with me into disgrace. I have thought that probably I am at this moment the chief difficulty in the way of a conclusion of this business; that if I were not fighting for my own release, the others would be pardoned easily enough. I would willingly bear the brunt of it all were it not for you. My perplexity is, that in fighting for you I am fighting also for myself."

Iréné discussed the possibility of Lydia's return to the cloister with her colleagues, and the extract from Chairo's letter was read to them. Masters, also, was consulted; for his effort to defend Neaera's reputation had enlisted him against Chairo on the side of the cult, and he had, therefore, been occasionally admitted to their counsels. It was finally decided that in view of Chairo's present attitude—the sincerity of which very few were disposed to doubt—and in view of the course Lydia proposed to adopt, she should be readmitted

to retreat in the cloister, though it was deemed wise to give as little publicity to this return as possible.

Masters, however, had told Neaera of it, and when Neaera arrived at Masters's rooms to find that he had left New York, her agile and vindictive mind immediately set itself to a combination of "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," in which somehow or another she wanted Lydia and Chairo to play a part—a part that would give some satisfaction to her spite. Then, too, there was somewhere in her mind the possibility that if, as she understood, Chairo was hard pressed, and if, as she hoped, Lydia was to any degree alienated from him through the influence of the cloister, Chairo might be induced to share her evils with her. There were chapters in their past that he might not find it distasteful to rehearse.

Neaera on arriving in New York found Masters's aunt fussily desirous to be useful to her, and yet very anxious at the thought that she was harboring a political runaway. Neaera had arrived after dark, so veiled as to escape recognition. She was nerved for an encounter with Masters, in which she was by feminine dexterity to dissipate the suspicions to which he had fallen too easy a prey, and the news that he was gone had for first

effect to make her restlessly anxious to do something. She therefore asked whether two notes could be delivered by private messenger that night, one to Lydia and one to Chairo. After inquiry, arrangements were made to do this, and Neaera sat down to contrive her little plot. The first part of it was simple enough. She wrote to Lydia that she had come to New York at great personal risk expressly to see her on a matter of vital importance, and asked her to come the next morning punctually at ten. To Chairo she showed less solicitude: she confined herself to the bare statement of her whereabouts, and that she would be alone next morning at a quarter past ten till half past. The messenger was directed not to wait for an answer to either note.

The next morning, punctually at ten, Lydia, to Neaera's delight, was shown into Masters's study.

"I had to see you," said Neaera, kissing her. She dismissed the aunt, begging her not to admit any other persons without announcing them, and put Lydia down on a sofa. She sat next to Lydia and took her hand.

"I am afraid you don't like me," she said.

"On the contrary," answered Lydia, "I like you, but I differ from you."

"Yes, I know; we differ on almost everything; on the cult, on state employment, on personal liberty, etc., etc., but then, we have one thing in common, we are both women."

Lydia looked a little puzzled. This abstract conversation was not what she had been prepared by Neaera's note to expect.

"I am not at all sure," she said, "that it is not just about womanhood that we differ most."

"Lydia!" answered Neaera reproachfully.

"I did not mean to wound you," said Lydia quickly. "There is so much room for honest difference of opinion that I do not undertake to set my opinion against yours, or indeed anyone's. But is it not dangerous for you to be here?"

Neaera smiled consciously, and said:

"I am not thinking of that. I came to see you because I felt you ought to be put right, and I want to do right; in the first place, you will be misled if you believe the wicked falsehoods that are being circulated in order to put the whole blame for what has occurred upon me. I should never have left New York of my own will. Masters forced me to go, and I am occupying his cottage at Englewood. I am prepared at any time to return to New York and set things right, and I can; I can testify to the message sent by Chairo,

to my efforts to induce Balbus to give up the attempt at rescue, to Balbus's refusal to listen to me, to his having arrested Xenos and bound him, to my having released Xenos—and Xenos will, I am sure, if I ask him, confirm my testimony. This will set Chairo right before the committee; only I don't want to see Chairo. He has been imploring me for an interview. I don't want to complicate things; you have suffered enough, you shall not suffer any more through me——"

Lydia was about to rise and leave the room; she would not by word or gesture admit the inference to be drawn from Neaera's words—admit the possibility of inconstancy on the part of Chairo; but at the moment she was about to rise a ring was heard at the door, and presently the aunt appeared excitedly, and announced that Chairo was there. Neaera jumped up and shut the door.

"You must not see him here," she said to Lydia. "Come into this room," and she beckoned her into an adjoining parlor, separated from the study only by a curtain. Lydia, who was under a promise not to meet Chairo, had no option but to follow Neaera, but she followed with a cheek flushed with indignation. She sat stiffly in a chair while Neaera left her to receive Chairo. She

heard the door of the study open and Neaera's voice in the adjoining room say:

"Chairo, my poor Chairo!"

Then she buried her face in her hands and her fingers in her ears so that she should not be an unwilling listener. She would be staunch to her faith in Chairo, for this was the one rock under the shelter of which in the shifting and stormy skies she felt there was any longer any safety for her.

Lydia heard in spite of herself Neaera's cooing treble and the rich vibrating notes of Chairo's voice; she heard them laugh once, and then there came what seemed to be a silence that was terrible to her. Later, the voices resumed again. She passed a half hour of anguish, striving to listen and striving not to hear, and during that half hour she thought she heard the voices in the adjoining room pass through every gamut of emotion; they were sometimes raised as though each was striving to outdo the other, then they would sink into silence again. Would it never come to an end—this interview between the man she loved and a woman she despised? At last she heard a door close; she removed her hands from her head and tried to look composed.

Neaera came to her with her cheeks flushed.

"Did you hear anything?" asked she.

Lydia arose.

"I have been here too long," said Lydia. "You have nothing else to say, I think," and she moved out of the parlor into the study and was moving out of the study into the hall when Neaera stopped her, and said:

"You are not mistaking Chairo's visit, are you?" There was the prettiest little dimple in Neaera's cheek as she said this. "Nothing but politics," she added, and the dimple deepened.

"Good-by," said Lydia, without holding out her hand.

Neaera burst out now into a little laugh, for Lydia had passed her and was at the door.

"Nothing but politics," laughed Neaera, as Lydia shut the door behind her.

CHAPTER XXIII

A LIBEL

AS Lydia hurried back to the cloister she had a humiliated sense of having been in contact with something foul. Indignant at the trap which had been laid for her, sore at the struggle neither to listen nor to doubt, one thought only occupied her: to get back to the cloister and wash her mind and body clean of the whole concern.

She had not been allowed to respond to Neaera's invitation without a long discussion with Iréné and the Mother Superior. The compact upon which she had come to New York was that she was not to meet Chairo there; to insure this, it had been the unexpressed understanding that she would not leave the cloister until Chairo's case was judged—or at least not leave it without the permission of the Demetrian authorities. So when Neaera's message was received, Lydia at once showed it to Iréné.

Neaera's rôle in the whole matter was such an important one, and so much depended on what it could be proved to have been, that the Mother Superior judged it worth the risk to allow Lydia to visit Neaera. When, therefore, Lydia returned to the cloister, Iréné at once questioned her as to the result of the interview.

But Lydia was not prepared to lay bare even to Iréné all she had suffered at Masters's rooms. It was already pitiful enough that her love for Chairo had become a subject for public discussion, and, indeed, a matter of political concern. This last agony she would keep to herself; she felt unable to talk about it to others, so she answered Iréné imploringly:

"Do not ask me. Nothing has come of it which can be of the slightest importance to the cult or to any one. Neaera is a worse woman than I thought."

Iréné hesitated. She did not wish to intrude on Lydia, and yet she knew the Mother Superior would not be satisfied with this answer. But there was no reason for forcing an answer from Lydia at once, so she accompanied her to her room.

"I want a bath," said Lydia. "I feel contaminated."

"Physically contaminated?" asked Iréné, smiling.

"The mere presence of that woman is a physical contamination," answered Lydia.

"Well, let us go down and take a plunge together," answered Iréné, laughing.

"Will you?" asked Lydia. "And then we can go to the temple afterwards. That will be the best of all."

The two women stepped down to the swimming bath and donned their swimming dress.

Lydia stood on the plunging board, and as she raised her beautiful arms above her head and straightened herself for the plunge, she said:

"Ah! Iréné, if life were all as simple and as wholesome and as delightful as this!"

Reinvigorated by the fresh salt plunge, they resumed their draperies and walked slowly to the temple. The service was coming to an end and they knelt to hear the closing chorus of the Choephoroi. The words came with refreshing distinctness to Lydia, and the hopefulness of them filled her heart with strength. They told of the beauty of women, of their devotion. Beauty was a snare, but it was also a sanctuary. For the goddess gave beauty to the good and to the evil alike —so had the Fates decreed. And the evil would

use it to the undoing of man, but the good to the building of him up. And the goddess loved good and hated evil.

Then came the prayer of the women; they prayed to Demeter to give them charm to delight and courage to renounce, that love and moderation bring in the end happiness and peace.

And the priest lifted his hand in benediction:

"Go forth, for the goddess hath blessed you, and hath bidden you take heed that, pitiless though be Anagke, even her empire may at last be broken by the fruit of your womb."

The congregation knelt at these words and remained kneeling while the choir marched out singing a recessional, solemn and strong. Then came the novices, the Demetrians, and, last of all, the high priest bearing the sacred emblem.

When Lydia and Iréné left the temple and followed the arcade to the cloister, all doubts and fears seemed to have fallen from Lydia, as scales from eyes blinded by cataract.

"How beautiful the cult of Demeter is!" exclaimed Lydia, "and how strengthening."

Iréné passed her arm round Lydia's waist. "You know now," she said, "how easy my sacrifice has become! Oh, we have to pass through the fire, but once the ordeal is over, happiness comes

unbidden and unexpected. Come to my boy—my boys, I should say. I left them at work and I shall probably find them at play; but they are truthful and innocent. Their innocence is a daily delight to me."

And the two women returned to their duties. Lydia forgot that she had heard Neaera whispering to Chairo. She had taken in a draught of strength, and she needed it, for another trial was at hand.

Lydia was allowed to sleep that night the sleep of the innocent, but the next morning while she was engaged in the hospital ward, Iréné came to her with an expression of agitation on her face that was unusual. She carried in her hand a newspaper, which Lydia was not slow in recognizing, and asked Lydia when she would be through her work, as she had an important word to say to her.

Lydia promised to hurry and be back in her room within ten minutes. Iréné said she would go at once to her room and wait there. The moment Iréné left the room the probable contents of the newspaper flashed upon her, and she saw the folly of her reticence. She was putting the last bandage about the leg of a child when suddenly,

at the thought of the false construction that might be placed upon her silence, a weakness came over her that made it almost impossible for her to finish her task.

"What is the matter, Aunt Lydia?" asked the child; "you look pale."

Lydia collected herself. "Nothing," she said, "I shall be all right presently." She passed her unoccupied hand over her eyes and was able to resume and complete her work.

When she had sewn up the bandage she put back the small wounded limb into the bed, tucked in the sheets, and, preoccupied as she was with her new concern, was moving away without giving the child the customary kiss.

"Aunt Lydia!" cried out the child, holding out its little hands.

"Darling," answered Lydia, and as the soft arms closed around her neck and she felt innocent lips upon her cheek, tears gushed from her eyes, of which—relief though they gave her—she was nevertheless ashamed.

The child looked wonderingly at her, and she said:

"It is nothing at all, and Aunt Lydia is very grateful for a sweet little kiss."

The child patted her cheek with a dimpled

hand as she bent over him, and Lydia left, wondering how often she would have to be reminded that happiness did not depend only upon the satisfaction of our own desires. She had left the temple full of this thought, and yet a suspected attack, directed by a newspaper against her own particular designs, had in a moment blackened her entire horizon. When she reached her room and found Iréné there she was once more calm and strong.

She found Iréné sitting down, with the newspaper open on her knees. It was published by a few devotees in vindication of the cult, although lacking its support. The cult had, indeed, often tried to suppress its publication but had not succeeded. It had been able only to compel the publishers to change its name, for it had been published at first under the title "The Demetrian." The cult had pointed out that this title gave the impression that it was an authorized organ, whereas it was not only unauthorized but published in a spirit opposite to that taught by the cult. So the name had been changed to "Sacrifice," this word having been selected in opposition to the word "Liberty"—the title of its rival.

In the issue of that morning was the following paragraph:

"We are incensed to learn that although Chairo was given his liberty on the express understanding that he was not to use it in order to consummate his outrage on Lydia, and although Lydia was allowed to come to New York only on the condition that she was to remain confined to the cloister and not to see Chairo, these two, who have already scandalized the cult and the whole community beyond endurance, managed yesterday to meet clandestinely at the rooms of Masters, between ten and eleven in the morning. Masters is not in New York, so he cannot be held responsible for this assignation; and Masters being out of town it is hardly necessary to point out that on this occasion the guilty couple were quite alone."

Lydia thought when she entered her room that she was braced to endure anything, but when she came to the closing words of the paragraph the blood rushed to her face. She managed, however, to avoid further expression of her indignation.

"It is false, of course?" said Iréné.

"No," answered Lydia, and with burning cheeks she turned her tired eyes on Iréné. "It is not false—and it is not true."

"What do you mean?" asked Iréné anxiously.

"Chairo was there."

"And you saw him?"

Iréné was bending over her breathlessly.

A fearful agitation tormented Lydia. Must

she indeed renew the anguish of that hour—nay, treble it, by laying it bare to all the world? She could have told it to Iréné, but to tell it to her as a vindication of herself would involve the telling of it to the Mother Superior and to the rest. And who would believe that she had not seen or spoken to Chairo, that far from seeing him, she had crouched in an adjoining room with her fingers at her ears in agony lest she should hear and lest she should not hear?

She remained silent, with her head bowed over the offending sheet.

"You *must* tell me," Iréné pleaded; "I need not tell it to any one—at least I think I need not," added she, hesitating, "but I know you have done no wrong; you must clear yourself, Lydia; for the love of the goddess, tell me."

"For the love of the goddess," repeated Lydia slowly; she paused a moment, and then, mistress of herself again, she said:

"I neither saw Chairo nor spoke to him. *You* will believe this, but who else will?"

"Your word is enough for me," answered Iréné, "and I shall make it enough for them all."

The women arose and embraced each other, then Lydia said:

"Too much has been already said about the

most secret as well as the most sacred matters of a woman's life. It belongs to us women to preserve the dignity that we derive from Demeter, and that we owe her. I shall say no more on this matter. Am I not right?"

CHAPTER XXIV

NEAERA AGAIN

NEAERA'S attempt on Chairo had proved a humiliating failure, and when she confronted Lydia her cheeks were flushed, not with success as might have been imagined, but with the effort to escape without disgrace from a situation for which she had no one to thank or blame but herself. Chairo had certainly at one time been attracted by Neaera beyond the limits of mere companionship, but he had not taken long to discover that the glances that tended to bewitch him were no less bewitchingly turned on others, and he soon put Neaera where she deserved in his acquaintance.

She was extremely useful to him in his political plans and on the staff of "Liberty"; and although he was dimly conscious that Neaera would to the end—at every moment that the strain of the actual work was relieved—endeavor to bring into their intimacy the element of coquetry of which she was a past master, Chairo treated this dis-

position with something of the amused sense of her charm that would be elicited by a pet animal. And this willingness to be amused by her Neaera understood to mean a tribute to her attractiveness that might on a suitable occasion lead to an exchange of vows at the altar of matrimony.

But she little understood Chairo when she attempted to force the occasion of their meeting at Masters's into a channel so opposite to his present disposition. When he entered the room where Neaera awaited him the lines in his face and the fatigue in his eye elicited from Neaera an ejaculation in which, strange to say, there was some real sincerity. She was truly sorry for him, and she was woman enough to guess that the weary face before her was due to no mere political reverses, for the faee was not only that of a tired man, it was also that of a man who had been chastened. She was restive under the thought that the chastening influence could be his love for Lydia, and the problem before her grew complicated when she guessed how difficult it would be for her to elicit from Chairo any word that could sting the woman whom to that particular end she had secreted in the adjoining room. Then, too, although she was mistress of her own voice, she was not mistress of Chairo's, and the possibility that

Lydia might close her ears was one that did not enter within the scope of Neaera's imagination.

After having expressed her sympathy for Chairo and found that it elicited little or no response from him, but, on the contrary, that he was eager to know the reason of her presence in New York and of her message to him, she launched upon a highly imaginative account of her relations to Masters, and with her command of humor very soon got Chairo laughing over the success with which, according to her story, she had pulled the wool over Masters's eyes. Chairo had no reason to love Masters, and he had long ceased to regard Neaera as a responsible person; the immorality of her proceeding affected him, therefore, no more than if he had observed it in a monkey or a cat.

Neaera told her story in words so rapid and a voice so low that Lydia could hardly have understood it had she tried, and Neaera felt that she had scored a point when she had made Chairo laugh. Then, anticipating the effect of silence on Lydia, she had handed Chairo some selected passages from Masters's letters to read, and as Chairo burst again into laughter over certain passages in them, Neaera began to feel she might venture farther. Laughter, especially over an unrighteous

matter, tends to make all righteousness seem superfluous, but when Neaera got near Chairo, in a pretense of reading over his shoulder, a very slight and almost unconscious movement of Chairo away from her made her understand that any further effort in this direction would be a mistake.

So Neaera set herself to discussing very seriously the situation with Chairo, assured him that she was prepared to sacrifice herself, and with a tear in her eye admitted to him, almost in a whisper, that she had tampered with his carriage.

"I knew it," said Chairo.

"But did you guess why?" asked Neaera, very low.

Chairo did not answer, but looked inquiry.

"Then you shall never know," continued Neaera.

This was the psychological moment of the interview. She had intended, had Chairo given her the least encouragement, to throw herself into his arms and confess to him that she had never loved any man but him, that so great was her love for him that she was prepared now to face the investigating committee, tell the whole story, and telling the story by so much exonerate him. She had expected that if there was a spark of affection in Chairo's heart for her, his chivalrousness would

be roused by this offer, and he would share her fortunes rather than permit her sacrifice to assure his.

But the possibility of this imagined scene had been dissipated by that little unconscious movement of Chairo's away from her. Then, too, she knew that Lydia was in the next room, and she almost regretted now that she was there, for if Lydia had not been there she might have risked the venture. But that Lydia should witness a humiliating rejection was a risk she could not take. So she had spoken very low and rapidly in the hope that although Lydia might not hear any specific word that would hurt, she might gather a general impression that would sufficiently torment her. She little knew how completely she was, to this extent at any rate, succeeding.

"My dear Neaera," answered Chairo, "you are a very charming and complicated person and I do not pretend to guess why you chose to thwart my plans. But you have done me a great wrong in many ways. Should you decide now to repair them—in so far as this is possible—you will be behaving in a manner which, though proper, would hardly be consistent." He smiled a little as he said this; Neaera wished he would not speak so loud, and was even betrayed into a gesture

which he interpreted as a gesture of protest, but was really an instinctive effort to induce him to lower his voice.

"You are very cruel to me," said Neaera, and she lowered her eyelids so that her long, black lashes swept her cheek.

"And you are a charming little *comédienne*," laughed Chairo, "and you ought to have devoted yourself to the stage."

"The world's my stage," she said, raising her eyes with a flash of indignation. "And there is upon it every kind of character. But while I have made a fool of many I have always respected you, and this is how you pay me for it!"

Chairo was not deceived by her pretty little air of indignation, but he said to himself that though it was a part she was playing, she played it well; so he arose, and, taking her hand, said:

"I do not mean to be unkind, Neaera, and for anything you do to help me I shall be profoundly grateful."

"What shall I do, Chairo?" she asked, looking up appealingly to him.

"Ah! that is in your hands," he answered.

"You can count upon me," she said, holding his hand in both of hers.

Chairo did not wish to prolong the interview,

so by way of farewell he lifted her hands to his lips. Then she fell upon her knees, kissed his hands not once but many times, and bathed them in her tears. He lifted her gently and put her in her chair.

"Good-bye, little woman," he said gently, "and be sure that whatever you may do, I shall feel kindly toward you," and disengaging himself from her, he left the room.

Neaera saw him leave with something like real affection in her heart. "He is the best of them all," she said, "and I might have loved him really." And whether it was that there was in her something that might have responded to him had he love to give her or whether it was mere reaction from her own trumped-up distress, there was a moment as Neaera sat there when the little woman did sincerely think herself in love.

But the recollection that Lydia was in the next room came to her, and she wondered how much Lydia had heard. She looked in the mirror and saw there the reflection of the very agitation she wished Lydia to suspect, and so before the trace of it could disappear, she hurried to her victim. Perhaps, thought she, Lydia had heard something without hearing too much.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LIBEL INVESTIGATED

CHAIRO was sitting at the head of one of the tables in the hall of our building, and Ariston and I were on either side of him, when the morning papers were brought in. Since the disappearance of "Liberty," only two morning papers were daily published in New York: the state paper, entitled "The New York News," and "Sacrifice." Chairo rapidly perused "The News" and handed it to me. I was absorbed half in consuming the oatmeal, with which our breakfast usually closed, and half in reading "The News," when I was suddenly aware of an agitation in my neighbor which caused me to look up at him.

I was surprised at the shape this agitation took; Chairo was a choleric man; as I first remember him, very slight causes of annoyance sent the blood to his face and found expression at once in a few violent sentences. This morning, the first

impatient gesture over, he sat very still, pale, and with beads of cold perspiration on his forehead.

"What is it?" asked Ariston.

Chairo pushed the paper to him.

Ariston, after reading the passage indicated, said:

"Of course I understand that publicity of any kind on such a subject must be odious to you; but after all, it is a lie, and can be easily proved to be such."

"It is not altogether a lie," answered Chairo. "I was at Masters's rooms at the hour indicated, but Lydia was not there—at least," he added, correcting himself, "I did not see her there." For already he began to suspect that Neaera had been at her tricks again.

"I shall go to the editor at once," continued Chairo, "and insist on the publication of an apology."

The paper had by this time been handed to me and I had read the libel.

"Don't go to the editor now," urged Ariston. "You are justly indignant, and you have a man to deal with, in the editor, who will only add to your exasperation. Write a simple denial of the fact that you have seen or spoken to Lydia at any time or place since your arrest."

"I won't drag her name into the paper again," exclaimed Chairo. "If I write anything it must be so contrived as not to introduce her name. I have a right to insist that my private affairs be no more discussed in the paper."

"You have the undoubted right under our law to demand this, but don't be impatient if I answer you that this matter is not a purely private one; it is a matter of grave public interest."

Chairo flashed a look at Ariston that we both understood; it meant a sudden revival of his aversion for the cult, which made of this private matter one with which the public had a right to meddle; but the look died away, and Chairo's face resumed the settled expression of discouragement which had marked it since the sessions of the investigating committee began.

"Let me see," said Ariston, "if I cannot draw up a letter which the paper will have to publish," and he scribbled on the newspaper band that Chairo had torn off and thrown aside. Very soon he produced the following:

THE EDITOR OF "SACRIFICE."

"SIR: I avail myself of my right under the law to insist on your publishing this letter in the same place and in the same type as the paragraph to which it refers.

"The statement that I have in spirit or in letter violated the compact under which I was released is not true. I was at Masters's rooms at the hour indicated, but I met no one there.

"Should you add anything to the libel already published, by way of comment, head line, or otherwise of a nature to cast a doubt upon the contradiction herein contained, I shall at once have you prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law.

"I beg also to inform you that I shall regard any further reference to this incident as an improper meddling with my private affairs, and shall proceed accordingly."

Chairo glanced at the proposed letter, and said:

"It is quite satisfactory except as to one statement in it. I did not meet Lydia at Masters', but I did meet another woman there."

Ariston and I looked at one another in surprise.

"An indiscretion?" asked Ariston.

"Not at all," said Chairo, "but a secret."

This was very awkward.

"I need not hesitate to tell you as my counsel, in confidence," continued Chairo. "But I think it must go no further."

We looked our inquiry.

"It was Neaera," said Chairo very low.

Ariston and I opened our eyes.

"That woman again!" exclaimed Ariston.

But Chairo rose, suggesting that it would be more prudent to discuss the matter in our rooms, and we followed him there.

Chairo then told us of his interview with Neaera, leaving out of it all that might have explained or reflected on her motives. Both Ariston and I felt certain he was leaving out something.

"Well, we must modify our letter," said Ariston, and after some discussion it was decided to leave out the statement that Chairo had been at Masters's rooms altogether, and to confine the letter therefore to a bare denial.

Ariston advised Chairo to go at once to Arkles and explain the facts, so as to put the cult in a position to write a similar denial. Ariston and I proceeded to the office of "Sacrifice."

On our way there we discussed Chairo's interview with Neaera.

"You may depend upon it," said Ariston, "she has lost Masters, and is making a desperate effort to get back Chairo."

"And she had Lydia secreted in an adjoining room," guessed I.

"That's it," said Ariston; "she is a devil!"

"But can Chairo insist on the publication of his letter?" asked I.

"Certainly," said Ariston. "In this we have but copied an admirable provision of the French law in your time. We have added to it a right for every man to prohibit any paper from publishing any matter regarding his private movements or his private affairs. The effect of this rule is that as every paper wants to be free to publish what is known as society news, and it can only do so with the tacit consent of those who make up society, it has to take care to publish nothing that even borders on libel. Libel and slander, I think I have told you, we regard as one of the greatest of social crimes."

We found the editor of "Sacrifice" in a condition of sanctimonious self-satisfaction. His article had produced a sensation, and he was triumphant in the thought that he was accomplishing for the cult what the cult itself was too feeble to accomplish for itself. He assumed an air of portentous gravity when he learned the object of our visit.

"I hold Chairo in the hollow of my hand," said he, "and I do not mean to let him off."

"You will have to publish his letter," insisted Ariston.

"I shall publish his letter and I shall brand it as a lie," retorted the editor.

"You will do so at your peril," answered Ariston.

"I fear no consequences," said the little man, straightening himself in his editorial chair. "When Chairo denies that he was at Masters's rooms between ten and eleven yesterday morning, and Lydia denies that she was there at the same hour, it will be time to resume investigation. So bare a denial as this"—and he threw Chairo's letter contemptuously down on his desk—"is not worth the paper it is written on."

"What is your proof of the correctness of your statement?" asked Ariston.

"I need not produce it," said the editor pompously, "but I have nothing to conceal," and after looking among the papers on his desk, he found and handed us a typewritten statement of the fact constituting the alleged libel. I was pretty sure that I detected here the hand of Neaera.

"Before publishing this anonymous statement," continued the editor, "I was careful to confirm it. The janitor of the building, upon being questioned by me in person as to who had passed his lodge during the hour in question, mentioned, of his own accord, both Chairo and Lydia.

They arrived each alone and at an interval of a few minutes. It was an assignation. There is no doubt of it."

"You had best not tell Chairo so," said Ariston.

"Don't threaten me, sir," exclaimed the editor. "Your own rôle in this matter will not bear investigation."

Ariston rose suddenly and advanced on the editor, but I interfered.

"You have come here," said I, "on an errand as counsel for Chairo, because you feared he would not control his temper. Are you going to lose yours?"

I had clutched Ariston by the arm, and at first he tried to extricate himself from me, but he saw the force of my argument, and, looking a little mortified, he said:

"Xenos is right. I have no right to prejudice Chairo's case by taking up a quarrel of my own. Xenos, however, is a witness to the words you have used and the animus you have shown. Now publish a word of comment if you dare!"

Then, turning abruptly to the door, we both left the room.

As soon as we were out of the building Ariston, who was trembling with suppressed passion, said:

"This man has to be scotched! He means mischief and is in a position to do mischief unless we can make Chairo's innocence in this matter clear as day. Let us summon the janitor at once before an examining magistrate and get *all* the facts from him. You understand me—*all*!"

I understood him, and appreciated the value of a procedure that enabled any citizen to demand at any time the examination of any other citizen before a magistrate—subject, of course, to a heavy penalty in case the proceeding turned out to be unreasonable and vexatious. Had either of us gone to the janitor ourselves we would have been accused of having influenced him, so we addressed ourselves directly to a magistrate who sent a messenger for the janitor and secured his attendance within half an hour.

The janitor answered rapidly under interrogation as to the attendance of both Chairo and Lydia at the hour named.

"Now tell us," asked Ariston, "who was in Masters's apartment at the time."

"Masters's aunt."

"Was no one else there?"

"Yes, a messenger of Masters went backward and forward several times."

Ariston demanded the name of the messenger, and the magistrate at once sent for him.

Ariston continued the examination.

"Was no one else in Masters's apartment besides his aunt?"

"I do not *know* of any one else being there."

He emphasized the word "know."

"When did Masters leave?"

"About two in the afternoon."

"Did no one else go to his rooms from two in the afternoon to the arrival of Lydia next morning?"

"Not to my knowledge."

Again he emphasized the word "knowledge."

"You do not know of your knowledge just where every one who passes your lodge goes?"

"No."

"Who passed your lodge and went to Masters's staircase on the day before Chairo and Lydia went there?"

The janitor mentioned here a large number of persons, and then added:

"There may have been others; I don't see every one who passes the lodge."

"Did any one that night gain admission after dark?"

"A great many."

"Did you get the names of all?"

"Yes—of all—at least, there was one I did not get."

At last the janitor hesitated, and it seemed clear that Ariston was on the right scent.

"Who was it?"

"I don't know. I was sleepy, I did not insist."

"Did no one pass out next day whom you had not admitted on the previous night?"

"I did not notice any one particularly; I could not distinguish; so many come and go."

The janitor seemed to think a little and hesitate.

"Go on," said Ariston. "Of whom are you thinking?"

"A veiled woman passed out that day and put a piece of money in my hand."

"Over-astute Neaera!" thought I.

"Did you not recognize the woman?" asked Ariston.

"No, she was veiled."

"Would you be surprised if I could guess at what hour she passed out?"

The janitor looked at Ariston stupidly.

"She passed out within an hour after Lydia."

"Yes," nodded the janitor, "just about that."

"Have you seen or talked with Masters's aunt since that day?"

"No."

Ariston then asked the magistrate to send for the messenger and Masters's aunt.

The janitor was asked to wait in case he should be needed, and we adjourned for lunch. While lunching Ariston and I agreed that we were going to get at the facts, and that it would be better not to let the editor know them till after to-morrow morning. "I mean to give him rope," said Ariston. "He'll hang himself, I think."

The messenger arrived shortly, and from him the identity of the veiled lady was very soon elicited. He had evidently received his piece of money also, and endeavored to avoid a direct admission, but Ariston got the fact out of him with but little difficulty, and his hesitation to admit it only brought out the more clearly the means Neaera had adopted to cover her tracks.

Masters's aunt arrived a little later in a state of utmost trepidation. She came up to Ariston at once and implored him to tell her what the matter was; had she done anything wrong; she would tell anything that was wanted, but there were some things she could not tell; really, was Ariston going to ask her to tell things she really could not tell?

But Ariston calmed her, and told her the magistrate was there to protect her.

She bustled up to the magistrate, who stopped her by handing her the Bible, upon which she was told to take her oath.

The judicial severity of the magistrate subdued her at once; she took the oath and sat down. Ariston whispered to the magistrate, begging him to conduct the examination, and pointing out that the object of it was to elicit what occurred at Masters's rooms and whether or not Chairo and Lydia had actually met there.

The magistrate asked her a few leading questions, and as soon as the witness had recovered from the subduing effect of the magistrate's presence the floodgates were opened, and she poured forth the whole story, leaving a strong presumption that Lydia had not seen Chairo, and that Chairo had ignored the presence of Lydia.

It was late in the afternoon before the examination was closed. We found Chairo resting after his bath. He told us that he had seen Arkles, shown him a copy of the letter Ariston had drawn, and agreed with Arkles that a similar letter be written by Lydia.

Ariston told Chairo that we had not been idle,

but that we judged it wiser for the present not to disclose to him what we had done. It would be advantageous later to be able to say that we had acted upon our own responsibility. We took Chairo after dinner to hear some music, and tried to make him forget the dreadful incidents of the day, suspecting, as we did, that a still more bitter dose was awaiting him next morning.

And the editor did not disappoint us. We breakfasted earlier than usual in order to receive the papers in our rooms. "Sacrifice" contained Chairo's letter just as Ariston had submitted it. Next came a shorter letter from Lydia to the following effect:

"SIR: It is not true that I have met Chairo since his release, clandestinely or otherwise, whether at Masters's rooms between ten and eleven day before yesterday, or at any other time or place.

"LYDIA SECOND."

But an editorial carried out the editor's threat of the day before. It stated that in compliance with the law, letters signed by Chairo and Lydia respectively had been that day published denying the truth of the charge made against them on the previous day, but that a sense of the duty which the paper owed to the public made it impossible to comply with Chairo's order to refrain from

further comment on the matter. It was not of a private nature. On the contrary, it was a matter of the gravest public concern. "No one," it went on to say, "is less interested in Chairo's private affairs than ourselves, and we fully appreciate the reasons why he should prefer that his private affairs be not at this moment, or any other, exposed to public scrutiny; but he is charged with having violated the sanctity of the cloister, with having outraged a Demetrian, and with having, in violation of his oath, sought to consummate the crime, the perpetration of which had been prevented by the vigilance of the Demetrian cult. Is this a matter of purely private concern?"

The editorial then proceeded to explain the carefulness with which it had verified the truth of the statement published, compared the circumstantial evidence produced by themselves with the bareness of the denial published by the parties incriminated, and closed with the following words:

"We have always stood, and we stand to-day, for peace, purity, and cleanliness of life. Chairo stands for violence, lust, and turpitude. We shall not allow ourselves to be intimidated by him or diverted from our plain duty to brand his contradiction as a lie."

It was a paper containing this outrageous attack on Chairo that Ariston brought into our room, flourishing it over his head with an air of triumph, and crying:

"We have him—we have him. Good-bye, 'Sacrifice'"; and making a semblance of blowing it into the air, he handed it to Chairo, but before Chairo could read it he held it away from him and said:

"This is going to exasperate you—but believe me it is the best thing that could happen. We have already secured sworn evidence taken before a magistrate that vindicates both you and Lydia —don't ask us what it is—I shall be responsible for all I do. The intemperance of the language you are going to read is going to do you more good than all the eloquence you can command in yourself or in others."

When Chairo read the article he insisted on Ariston's telling him what evidence we had, and Ariston explained the proceedings of the previous day at length; he added that he knew Chairo would object to bring home the responsibility to Neaera, but that what Chairo might have reasons for not doing he, Ariston, had no reason for not doing, and that he proposed to make it clear that he, Ariston, was responsible for the whole proceeding and not Chairo.

"Well," said Chairo, "you have gone beyond the point where I can either stop or help you."

"Exactly," argued Ariston, "and this is exactly where I wanted to put you. This last attack upon both you and Lydia—for, of course, she is as much included as yourself—leaves you no alternative but to prosecute the editor. I propose to present to-day's article to the magistrate who took the testimony yesterday. He will grant me an order of arrest against the editor for libel, and both you and Lydia will be vindicated as you deserve."

As Ariston spoke, a note was handed to me from Anna of Ann begging me urgently to go and see her that afternoon at tea time. I showed it to Ariston, and we wondered what new development things were taking that could include Anna of Ann.

"Harmes!" exclaimed Ariston.

I was puzzled.

"What do you mean?" asked I.

"Neaera is playing her last card."

Then it flashed upon me.

That afternoon I went to see Anna of Ann and found her in profound dejection. Ariston had guessed right. A few days before Harmes had re-

ceived a letter from Neaera and absented himself the whole afternoon. He had returned much absorbed, and the next afternoon he had absented himself again. Anna had asked him if he had not heard from Neaera, and he had answered indignantly that all were conspiring to make a scapegoat of her. Anna had protested, but every word she said had only contributed to increase his indignation. He was evidently caught in the siren's meshes and hopelessly under her influence. What, asked Anna, should be done?

I pointed out to Anna that Ariston was much better able to help her in such a matter, and asked to be allowed to send Ariston to her the following day, but she demurred. I guessed at the reason of her objection and suggested her father calling on Ariston. But her father knew nothing of the matter and Anna thought it unwise to let him know.

"Then let your mother call on Ariston at his office," suggested I.

"That would be better," answered Anna.

And I arranged to let her know next day when Ariston would be at his office.

Ariston was much interested to learn that he had guessed right, and very willingly gave an appointment for the next day.

Meanwhile, the district attorney had obtained an order of arrest against the editor, and next day's issue was edited by a new man. It contained a statement of the arrest of the editor, professed to suspend judgment until after the trial, and submitted under the circumstances the wisdom of silence on the subject.

But the affair had made a profound impression upon the public and the legislature, and although Chairo's guilt as to conspiracy was clear, it was felt to be equally clear that he had sincerely done what he could to prevent the attack upon the House of Detention. Moreover, he was now being unfairly treated and this created a revulsion of feeling in his favor. Ariston was much encouraged, for he did not conceal from me his conviction that, as matters stood before this incident, the feeling of a large majority of the legislature was that an example ought to be made of Chairo. So long as this feeling prevailed, no amnesty bill could have been passed that included him, and there was no reason to believe that he could expect anything less than the full penalty of the law at the hands of the courts.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ELECTION

I OFTEN heard Chairo and his friends discuss their plans for the coming electoral campaign, but have not set these things down because there was in them nothing that was necessary to my story or very different from the political campaigns of our day. There was less corruption, for there were no needy persons in the state; but corruption was by no means unknown, especially since the development of private industry had created a private and transferable money system, and the relatively large wealth of such men as Campbell and Masters caused them to be feared. Campbell, however, had no political aspirations; his hoarding instinct occupied his time and devoured his ambition. Masters, on the other hand, had a large fund at his disposal which it was feared he might use in his unreasoning desire to vindicate Neaera. But when Masters returned from Boston and read the testimony taken by the magistrate he called on Chairo to express

regret at the attitude he had taken and to agree with him as to the coming campaign.

Masters was still in favor of the amnesty bill, but he saw that a general bill that would include Neaera could not, and ought not, to be passed. He doubted the possibility of pushing through the legislature one that would altogether protect Chairo, and frankly told Chairo so. He was surprised to hear Chairo admit his own concurrence with this view.

"I cannot play a conspicuous part," said Chairo, "in a campaign in which I am so deeply involved; I propose to stand for the legislature in my own district, but I shall address my constituents only once, and then I shall make it clear to them that I shall not regard my election as a vindication of the course I have adopted in setting myself against the state, but as evidence that upon my frank avowal that I was wrong I still have their sympathy and confidence."

Masters suggested that they should attend on the governor, who was standing for reëlection, and agree with him as to the course to be taken, with a view to diminishing to the utmost possible the chances of a serious collision between the government and the opposition on the amnesty question.

I was very much surprised one day to find

both Masters and the governor dining at our table in our hall, and to learn that although the governor had offices in the capitol he lived with his family in the same apartment in which he had always lived, and, except when he was actually engaged in the duties of his office, there was nothing to distinguish his manner of living from that of the humblest of his fellow citizens.

He was a man of an extremely simple exterior, though his head was distinguished and his language chosen. We conversed about the political outlook, and over our coffee, which Ariston made himself in our rooms, the governor summed up the position as follows:

"The country districts will send us a large majority hostile to Chairo, because they are conservative and abhor violence. Chairo will have from the city and most of the large towns a small but staunch and intelligent following. Masters will influence a large number of votes, as will also the Demetrian cult. I don't myself think the state can afford to allow any man to organize an armed rebellion—not even Chairo—without putting upon him some mark of its authority, and I think it would be unwise in Chairo's interests to ask that he should escape without censure and even punishment. I propose in my electoral address to advise

pardon for all who have been led by others into rebellion, severity for those who led them into it, and for those leaders who can plead extenuating circumstances, moderation."

We all felt that the governor's attitude was not only wise on general political grounds, but also from the narrower point of view of Chairo's personal interest.

The nomination of candidates at the primaries evinced a political animosity against Chairo of which we were altogether unaware. To our amazement the notion that Neaera was the victim of a concerted effort to exonerate Chairo at her expense had so widely prevailed that neither discussion nor argument was any longer of any avail. All who defended Chairo were hounded down as the persecutors of a defenseless woman, and were it not for the votes of the women, who were less obtuse on the question than the men, neither Chairo nor any of his following would have received a nomination. As it was, Chairo was nominated only by a dangerously narrow majority, and most of his party were dropped altogether. But the very women who were not deceived into vindicating Neaera went far beyond the limits of wisdom in their defense of the Demetrian cult. Although Arkles and Iréné did their

utmost to keep the enthusiasm of their supporters within reasonable bounds, the belief that the cult was attacked caused the nomination of a class of candidates who, if elected, were likely to do Chairo scant justice by their votes.

For some weeks I lived in a turmoil of political campaigning. It was a relief to be wakened on Christmas by a peal of Cathedral bells, and these over, to hear in the distant corridors an approaching hymn swell its note of praise as it passed our door and die away as it disappeared in the distance. We were all glad to feel that the electioneering was over, for Christmas Day is devoted entirely to the morning ritual and afternoon family gatherings; the 26th is devoted to final athletic competitions, the crowning of the victors, and public balls; and the 27th to the silent vote.

I am ashamed to say that although I had often delighted in the exterior of the Cathedral from a distance, I had never entered it till Christmas morning, for our quarters were some distance from it, and such religious exercises as I had attended with Ariston were held either in a neighboring chapel or at the temple of Demeter. The scene as I approached the Cathedral reminded me of what my imagination had sometimes constructed out of mediæval chronicles

around the spires of Chartres. It was a cold day and all the approaches to the Cathedral were crowded with men, women, and children, covered with outer garments that far more resembled those we see in the thirteenth century tapestries than the Greek dress that had first surprised me at Tyringham and in the interiors of New York. I learned that even in summer it was usual to don a special dress when attending a church service, not only out of respect for the church, but out of a sense of the artistic inappropriateness of a Greek dress in a gothic Cathedral.

The gigantic doors of the main entrance were thrown wide open, and as I mounted the long flight of steps that led to it, I was delighted and bewitched by a façade, wide as Bourges, richly sculptured as Rheims, and flanked by spires more beautiful than those of Soissons. From the deep, dim Cathedral itself came the pealing notes of the organ which, as we entered, made the air throb; I was rejoiced to find that the secret of old glass had been rediscovered, but so great a blaze of light came from the five great western portals that I did not fully appreciate the mystic colors of the *vitraux* till the doors were closed. Thereupon, from an entrance in the south transept there marched in a procession which, though more

familiar than that I had already witnessed in the temple of Demeter, far exceeded in splendor and impressiveness anything I had seen before. Less graceful, perhaps, than in the Demetrian cult but more solemn and devout, marched in the acolytes, swinging censers; they were followed by the choir, singing a Gregorian chant, than which assuredly nothing more subtly conveying the Christian idea has ever been composed. In order came after them the great officials of the city and state, including the mayor and the governor, a full representation from the priests and priestesses of Asclepius and from those of Demeter; the procession was closed by the lesser ecclesiastics bearing the cross, the canons, and, last of all, the bishop. The ritual did not differ much from that of the Roman and Anglican churches, except that the music was rendered with as much care and effect as at Munich or Bayreuth.

The sermon did not last more than ten minutes, and closed with an earnest reminder that in casting our votes we were exercising the highest act of sovereignty of which man is capable, and an entreaty so to cast them that the church—and all that the church stood for—might feel itself strengthened in the legislature as well as in the hearts of the people.

Whether on emerging from the Cathedral this solemn exhortation left as little trace in the shape of actual conduct as in our day I, of course, cannot tell, but I think the language of the headstrong during the succeeding days was less violent and the animus evinced less bitter for it.

The Christmas dinner which followed the service was held in the common hall, for it was deemed an occasion when all should join and contribute to make the day a happy one. Families either arranged to dine at separate tables or united to dine at one, and on this great festival wine flowed in abundance at the expense of the state.

Our own party consisted for the most part of the Tyringham colony, to which, however, were added many new city friends. Ariston sat between Anna of Ann and Iréné. We missed, however, Chairo and Lydia; the one dined alone from discretion, the other remained at the cloister. We were not a merry party, for the prospect for both of these two was dark, and when we drank the toast of "absent friends" there was a tear in many an eye.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE JOINT SESSION

ELECTION day passed quietly; it resulted in an overwhelming majority in favor of the government, and the character of the majority was clearly animated by the intention to visit heavily upon Chairo the consequences of his actions.

We had all understood that Lydia's return to New York was due to some determination on her part, but what that determination was not even Ariston knew. The first session of the legislature on the 1st of January, '94, was attended by the deepest misgiving on the part of all Chairo's friends; nothing could be determined by the proceedings of that day—which were purely formal—but on the next an incident occurred which showed how matters stood. The previous Speaker of the Senate who would, if reëlected, preside at the joint session of both houses, was a man of moderate views, who had for years impartially

administered the duties of his office. It was a matter of course that he should be renominated as the candidate of the government, and a motion to this effect was duly made by Peleas. But it was seconded by Masters, and this produced the effect of an understanding between the government and Chairo's men which exasperated the irreconcilables; one of them, therefore, in a moment of impulse nominated a distinguished Asclepian priest, who had been elected on the platform of war on Chairo; his nomination was hotly seconded by a chorus of voices, and although he was opposed by the government party and by the supporters of both Chairo and Masters, he was beaten only by a dozen votes.

The situation looked critical for Chairo when Masters stood up to bring the amnesty bill before the joint session; he was received in a manner signally different from that which usually greeted him; the applause of his own particular adherents sounded faint and hollow and only served to accentuate the silence of the rest. He did not speak at length, reserving himself till after the report of the investigating committee had been read. He was followed by several speakers, who repeated the unreasoning vituperation which had marked the electoral campaign, all of them op-

posed to the passage of an amnesty bill of any kind.

The real incident of the day was the reading of the report of the investigating committee, which, for the first time, officially brought out the facts as they were. The chairman of the committee who read the report concluded by a brief expression of personal opinion to the effect that after the reading of the report it was impossible for any one duly conscious of his duties to the state to approve of the amnesty bill as read. Doubtless many—perhaps, indeed, most of those concerned—had been unduly influenced by others, and for these he was himself prepared to cast a vote of pardon. But all the guilty parties were not before them. He was interrupted here by a loud murmur of approval and by a counter demonstration of those who still believed in Neaera's innocence. He did not propose to try any one in their absence (applause), but assuredly it was not proper to pardon any one in their absence either (loud applause). There was one case which demanded particular attention; he referred to the man who had organized the whole conspiracy. (There was a deep silence here, and many involuntarily turned to where Chairo sat erect and immovable with his arms crossed.) There was

evidence to show that after he had effected the particular personal end he had in view, he had sent a message intended to put an end to further violence. He asked the legislature to consider how far this tardy, unsuccessful, and, as it appeared to him, half-hearted effort at reparation deserved to be taken into account in mitigation.

This conclusion was greeted with the wildest applause; members stood up and, with vociferating gestures directed at the corner where Chairo sat, demanded justice and the full measure of the law.

It was expected that Masters would take the floor, but in the heated condition of the house he judged it wiser that Arkles should be heard before him. So Arkles slowly rose, and straightening himself to his full height, addressed the speaker. The disorder which had followed the speech of the chairman of the committee immediately subsided, and the spokesman of the Demetrian cult was listened to in respectful silence. "It is my honor," he said, "to address you on behalf of a religious cult which has been outraged, upon the question whether this outrage shall go unpunished or whether the cult shall be vindicated by the visitation on the guilty of the full measure of the law."

He used advisedly the very catchword "full measure of the law," which had never failed to secure applause at the meetings held by the indignant supporters of the cult, and his purpose was fulfilled, for he at once got them on his side, as the approval that greeted his opening fully showed. He then reviewed the history of the cult, its principles, the benefit it had bestowed; he dwelt upon the earnestness of its devotees, and contrasted the social conditions that prevailed where the cult was strong with those that prevailed where it was non-existent. For two hours he kept the unflagging attention of the audience with the most carefully reasoned exposition of what the cult stood for that that generation had heard. Clearly the conclusion to be drawn from his argument was, that an institution so essential to public welfare was entitled to the further protection of the state, and that an outrage upon it must be so punished as to render any repetition of the offense to the highest degree improbable. Sure of this conclusion, the irreconcilables joined with the government ranks in loud approval of Arkles's discourse. But here Arkles turned an unexpected corner, for after having demanded justice, in tones that filled the house with a reverberation of applause, he suddenly asked the ques-

tion: "And in this case, what is the justice we have a right to ask?"

He turned at this point to the desk by him, filled a glass with water, drank it, and continued:

"The Demetrian cult is not founded on legal enactment. It is not propped by any state authority. It derives all its strength from the appeal it makes to reason and morality. So long as it finds support in the public conscience it is strong; the moment it appeals from conscience to the state it confesses a weakness of which the cult is not to-day aware. Nay, there never was a day when the cult was more strong than now, never when it was better able to vindicate its rights upon its own merits, that is to say, not by appeal to the state for protection, but by appeal to every man and woman in the commonwealth for support.

"And here it is essential to make a careful distinction between acts committed in violation of the law of the land and those committed in violation of our sanctuary. As to the first, he, as spokesman of the cult, had nothing to say; the state alone could deal with them. As to the last, they had received the prayerful deliberation of the Demetrian council, and he was instructed now to read the following resolution:

"'Inasmuch as the exercise of our duties can be justified only by the extent to which this exercise is approved, not merely by the worshippers of Demeter but by the community at large;

"'Inasmuch as such exercise deals with the most sacred and intimate passions of the human heart;

"'We now solemnly declare that we count only upon devotion to the cult for protection, and deem it wiser to suffer sacrilege to go unpunished than by retaliation to keep alive in the hearts of the guilty or of those who support them, a spark of hostility or resentment.'"

A profound silence followed the reading of this resolution, and Arkles concluded as follows:

"It has been the policy of our commonwealth to abandon the principle of punishment for crime. Those who are unfit for social life we remove from social life and try to make them fit; until they are fit for it, we keep them isolated. Do not let us depart from a salutary rule in the interests of the cult, which the cult itself has largely contributed to introduce and which it is deeply interested in keeping alive. There are contingencies, Mr. Speaker, when the highest justice is mercy."

When Arkles sat down he left the session in a state of suspended judgment. There was applause, but it was the applause of men convinced

against their will, and the irreconcilables remained absolutely silent. The day was drawing to a close, and the session adjourned almost in a state of confusion.

As we walked home to our quarters we none of us were inclined to speak. "That speech of Arkles will bear fruit," said Ariston. But Chairo was gloomily silent, and I did not have the heart to speak words of encouragement I did not feel. We were joined at the bath by quite a number of our house, who seemed anxious to cheer us up by the gossip of the day. All were much exercised by the result of the four-mile race which had just been run. It was the first time a woman had ever entered for this race, and she had succeeded in making a dead heat of it. Chairo, who had excelled in these sports, was gradually aroused from his discouragement, and, without much reason for it, we returned to the session next day in a better humor than circumstances warranted, for the whole day was taken up in violent harangues against the incriminated parties, some attacking Chairo not only as a conspirator but as a coward for treachery to Neaera, others attacking Neaera without vindicating Chairo.

That evening Chairo left us to dine with a few of his followers, who, feeling the situation

desperate, advised a conference with Peleas, Masters, and Arkles, with a view to suggesting an amendment to the amnesty bill that would secure a majority without going to the extremes demanded by the irreconcilables.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LYDIA TO THE RESCUE

POLITICAL offenses, such as the one with which Chairo was charged, were punished not by confinement in farm colonies but by imprisonment in a fortress, and had this disadvantage that, whereas the term in the former case could be diminished by good conduct, in the latter case it was fixed for a number of years and was generally of inordinate length. This was the remnant of a code prepared at a time when social crimes were not much feared, whereas political crimes were regarded as of utmost danger to the commonwealth. The maximum term of imprisonment was fifty years, and this for Chairo would be practically equivalent to imprisonment for life. The irreconcilables clamored for nothing less than this. It was no small credit to Chairo's character in the community that with so heavy a sentence impending over him, it occurred to no one—not even his worst enemies—to ask that special precautions be made to prevent his escape.

That he would keep his parole was never for a moment doubted.

The difficulty attending any conclusion arose from the heterogeneous and unorganized character of the irreconcilables; they were split up into a number of factions, agreed only upon one thing—the "full measure of the law" for Chairo; in every other respect they differed, some demanding what they called justice, on grounds which they could not explain, but the reasonableness of which they made a matter of conscience and morality; others declared themselves to be vindicating "principles" which, upon examination, turned out to be pure assumptions built upon prejudice and temper; others professed to be acting as champions of the cult, too helpless to be able to defend itself, and although willing and anxious to discuss and explain their attitude, could never be brought to any other conclusion than the "full measure of the law"—a phrase which had obtained as complete a mastery over them as the "sleep" of a hypnotizing doctor over a hypnotic subject.

The third day of the session opened in as great uncertainty as before. Peleas had not spoken, and was unwilling to speak, until some amendment could be hit upon which had a reasonable

chance of uniting a majority. The debate was, therefore, left almost entirely in the hands of the irreconcilables, who vied with one another in the application to Chairo of epithets that were picturesque and vituperative. Toward the close of the session, however, an incident occurred that was unexpected and startling: Arkles arose and asked that the courtesy of the floor be extended to Lydia Second. Chairo half rose in protest, but Masters, who sat beside him, whispered a word in his ear and he resumed his seat, burying his chin in his breast. A loud murmur of excitement filled the chamber; the motion was put, and it was carried without a dissenting voice; the house sat wrapt in silence awaiting the entrance of the speaker. Soon Iréné was seen coming down a side aisle, and by her side, shrouded by a veil, a figure, which all immediately recognized as Lydia's. When they reached a point half way down the aisle they paused; Iréné said a word to Lydia, and Lydia removed her veil.

I had not seen her since we parted at Tyringham; as I looked at her preparing herself to speak I experienced a conflict of emotion that brought beads of perspiration to my forehead; my love for her now kindled into admiration, the hopelessness of it, the fate of Chairo, an un-

doubted admiration for him and yet a jealousy of him that tortured me, willingness, nay, almost a burning desire to effect Lydia's happiness at any cost—all these things struggled within me for mastery, as with compressed lips I sat waiting to hear her speak. She was obviously suffering from an emotion that made her eyes water and her throat dry; she lifted her hand to her bosom once or twice in futile agitation, but mastering herself, she stiffened, and, at last, as it were by a supreme effort, lifting her head high, began:

"I do not presume, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the legislature, to present myself before you trusting in my strength. I depend rather on my weakness, for I am a woman, and because I am a woman who has faltered"—she corrected herself—"who has suffered, you will hear me."

She spoke very low but very distinctly, and there was in the chamber a silence so complete that she could be heard at the utmost corner of it.

"For him who has joined with me in this misadventure I do not presume to speak at all. He is a man, and among men, able to hold his own. But you cannot strike him without striking me, and it is for myself I plead."

Chairo's chin buried itself deeper in his breast, but he controlled the impulse to protest. Indeed,

there was a note in Lydia's voice that brought a lump into his throat. He could not have protested had he dared.

Iréné had sent for a glass of water; Lydia partook of it, and then, raising her voice, proceeded:

"Ever since I was restored to my home I have kept silence, because I felt—and I was so advised—that a moment would come when I should be better understood than at a time when the public mind was inflamed by revolution and bloodshed. As to these things, I have cruelly felt the extent to which I was the occasion of them, but I ask you to consider whether indeed I was the cause. And I ask you, too, not to confuse the question raised by the cult of Demeter with those other questions for which the rebels stood. In these last I have had no share and to them I shall not again refer. They have no part in the question you have to decide. To give them a part would be to do me a great wrong.

"And as regards the cult of Demeter, there is no devouter daughter of the cult than I; and that I should stand to-day, arrayed in the eyes of some of you against the cult, chokes my utterance and fills my eyes with tears. Nor should I have had strength to plead my cause with you to-day

had I not come to you leaning on one of Demeter's worthiest votaries."

Here Lydia put her hand on Iréné's shoulder, and Iréné looked into her face and smiled.

"For in my heart there is a reverence for Demeter so profound that when the mission was tendered to me, I felt that a cubit had been added to my stature; I felt a strength grow in me to make what sacrifice was needful, and as day passed day the sacrifice grew less and my strength grew more.

"But oh, fellow-worshippers of Demeter," and she looked here at the part of the hall where the irreconcilables had grouped themselves, "do not frown on me when I say that there was also in my heart another reverence, another strength, of which I was not sufficiently aware; and in your faith in the cult you serve, do not blind yourself to that other cult to which, whether we will or no, we are all—yes, all—subject. We may harden our hearts to it, we may bring it as a sacrifice upon your altar, but if it has once grown deep enough, it overpowers all the rest—I am not ashamed to say it here—before you who ask mercy for Chairo and you who ask for his destruction, I am not ashamed to publish it to all the world—stronger than reverence for Demeter, stronger

than the unutterable honor of the Demetrian mission—is the love of a woman for a man."

She paused; there was no applause, but the breathless silence that reigned bore a higher tribute to the impression made than any spoken word or gesture.

"And when love came it brought with it a sense of duty to another, so that I no longer stood merely between Demeter and my love, I stood also between Demeter and Chairo"—a loud murmur of disapproval greeted these words. Lydia, however, went bravely on. "But I looked with suspicion upon an argument that so favored my own inclination, and believing duty to lie in resistance to inclination rather than in consent to it, I strangled my love, and with a pride in my own sacrifice that was false and bad I accepted the mission."

Again a murmur of disapproval filled the hall. This time Lydia acknowledged it by turning to the corner whence it came.

"Yes, I repeat it—with a pride in my own sacrifice that was false and bad—for it gave me strength to do a thing that was wrong! What is heroic in one is vanity in another. And I thank you for that expression of disapproval that reminds me to distinguish those to whom it is an

ugly hypocrisy. There are women—and may their names be blessed—who, before their hearts have been kindled by love, bear within them a capacity for sacrifice and a longing for maternity which makes of them fitting subjects for the Demetrian mission; but when a woman has once harbored the young God Eros, when she has by implication, if not by express promise, sanctioned the harboring of him in another, then the strength that can disown her love and break that promise is drawn from a vanity that is foolish, or a conceit that is contemptible; and as I look back to the day when, after weeks of weakening struggle, I arose from the bed of torment strangely endowed with a strength that enabled me to make unmoved my final vows, I see that my strength came not from Demeter but from self-righteousness and self-conceit. And I make this bitter confession before you all that the fault may rest where it should, not upon you, priests and priestesses of Demeter"—and here she looked up at the gallery where they sat—"not upon him"—and she turned almost imperceptibly to Chairo—"but upon me."

Her voice sank as she said these words, and there broke from many of us a murmur of sympathy.

"But these things," she continued in a louder voice, "are of little importance by the side of what I have yet to say. Pardon me, if I have had to speak of myself; it is not often—and, indeed, it is distressful that so private a thing as this should become matter of public concern. But you have to decide an issue in which the conduct of one least worthy of your attention has become set up, as it were, before you as the conduct of all my sex. It is not I that am judged, but all who are unworthy of the mission—or shall I not rather say—unfitted for it. For though I am willing—nay, desire—to accept my full share of blame, yet am I not willing that my sex shall in my person be judged less worthy than it is. Believe me, that noble as is the mission of Demeter, noble also is the love of a woman for a man, and though I bow my head as I confess my unfitness for the one, in vindication of the other I hold my head erect."

She straightened herself at these words, and her stature helped to give to this vindication both dignity and strength. There was something splendid in the gesture, the emphasis, and the inflection with which these words were said. For the first time Lydia's speech was here interrupted by applause; it began far away from her and was soon caught up by others, it swelled through the build-

ing, and feelings long pent up in hushed attention to her now found relief in an expression of triumphant approval; a few in their excitement rose to their feet, then more, till all, except Chairo, who remained resolutely seated, stood wildly gesticulating their admiration for the girl who had the courage to face them in vindication of a love upon which some had wished to throw disgrace, but which now she held up to universal honor.

The applause lasted several minutes; if it died away in one corner it was vociferously renewed in another, and when at last, out of very weariness, it came to an end, Lydia resumed:

"But all I have said is but a preface to what I have still to say: I have spoken to you of myself, but what shall I say to you of Chairo? I have told you of a duty I felt to him, but to every duty is there not a corresponding right? And if Chairo had rights does he not stand, too, for the rights of all his sex?"

Once more the chamber rang with renewed applause, and Chairo for the first time raised his head and looked at Lydia. Now at last she had lifted the subject to a level which eliminated him. He was no longer the issue; she was speaking for all men, for the rights universal of manhood,

which the cult had, in his case, ignored and must at last be vindicated.

"I have told you that by implication, if not by express words, Chairo had reason to know I loved him; was he to stand by and see the rights I had given him denied, rights for which he has stood, not for himself alone, but for all men long before his own became involved? He stands charged here with sacrilege and with violence. Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of the legislature, so far as I am concerned, he is guilty of neither the one nor the other."

A deep murmur passed through the chamber as Lydia's voice impressively lowered on these final words.

"Had the woman he snatched from Demeter's sanctuary been indeed fitted for it, then he would have been guilty of both. But he knew I was not fitted for it, he knew that I belonged to him, he knew that once I felt his presence in my room I would consent—*and I consented.*"

Chairo, whose eyes had remained riveted on Lydia ever since he raised them, now lowered them again, and he covered his face with his hands. That so sacred a thing to him as Lydia and his love for her should be dragged into a public discussion was cruel to him, but that the

story should be told as Lydia told it, filled his heart with a mixture of triumph and bitterness he could not endure to show.

"And so, Mr. Speaker, with my confession of consent, the charge against Chairo of sacrilege and violence falls to the ground. As to those who against his bidding sought to rescue their leader from his bonds I have this to say: When there shall have disappeared from the hearts of men the loyalty, devotion, and sacrifice that prompted an act of violence forever to be deplored, then let this world and all that is in it disappear from the constellations of God. They erred, but they erred in a cause they believed to be righteous, and I protest—I plead the state is strong enough to grant them pardon.

"Every institution, human and divine, has to pay a price for the blessings it bestows—*dura lex sed lex.* Eventually, perhaps, wisdom may so increase among us that the price all pay shall grow less and less; eventually, the mission may be neither offered to nor accepted by those unfit for it; perhaps, indeed, the events of last month may contribute to this wisdom, but to-day, O priests and priestesses of Demeter, join with me in the prayer to our legislators that they do not, by visiting on these men too severely the consequences of their

errors, bring discredit upon a cult so precious and so noble as that of the goddess you serve. Great is Demeter! But great also is Eros. May wisdom so guide your counsels that Eros, no longer tempted to destroy the altars of Demeter, may strengthen them and build them up, and so, through continence and sacrifice, remain for us as beautiful as he is strong!"

Lydia bowed her head over these words and gave her hand to Iréné. We all sat motionless; not a sound was heard as they slowly turned and proceeded to leave the chamber. Then, with one accord, we rose, and in a breathless silence the two women passed out.

We resumed our seats, and for some minutes no one spoke. At last Arkles moved that, in view of the remarkable and touching words they had just heard, the joint session adjourn for the day. "For," he added, "neither I, nor apparently any of my colleagues, are able or willing by any word of our own to efface or modify the impression they have left upon us."

"You have heard the motion," said the speaker. "In the absence of a dissenting voice the session will adjourn for the day." Not a voice was heard; we rose and left the chamber in silence.

CONCLUSION

My narrative has now come to a close: an amnesty bill was passed that included every person charged, except Neaera, and deprived Chairo of his political rights until the legislature should by a joint resolution restore them; the editor arrested for libel was found guilty and committed to a penal colony.

Lydia married Chairo. And Anna of Ann did not visit on Ariston his indifference too heavily, but her nuptials were darkened by the absence of Harmes. Out of a bold and crooked game Neaera had secured this one small satisfaction.

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